

WOMEN IN MONGOL IRAN

THE *KHĀTŪNS*, 1206–1335

BRUNO DE NICOLA

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Bruno De Nicola

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To Marta, Lara and Marco

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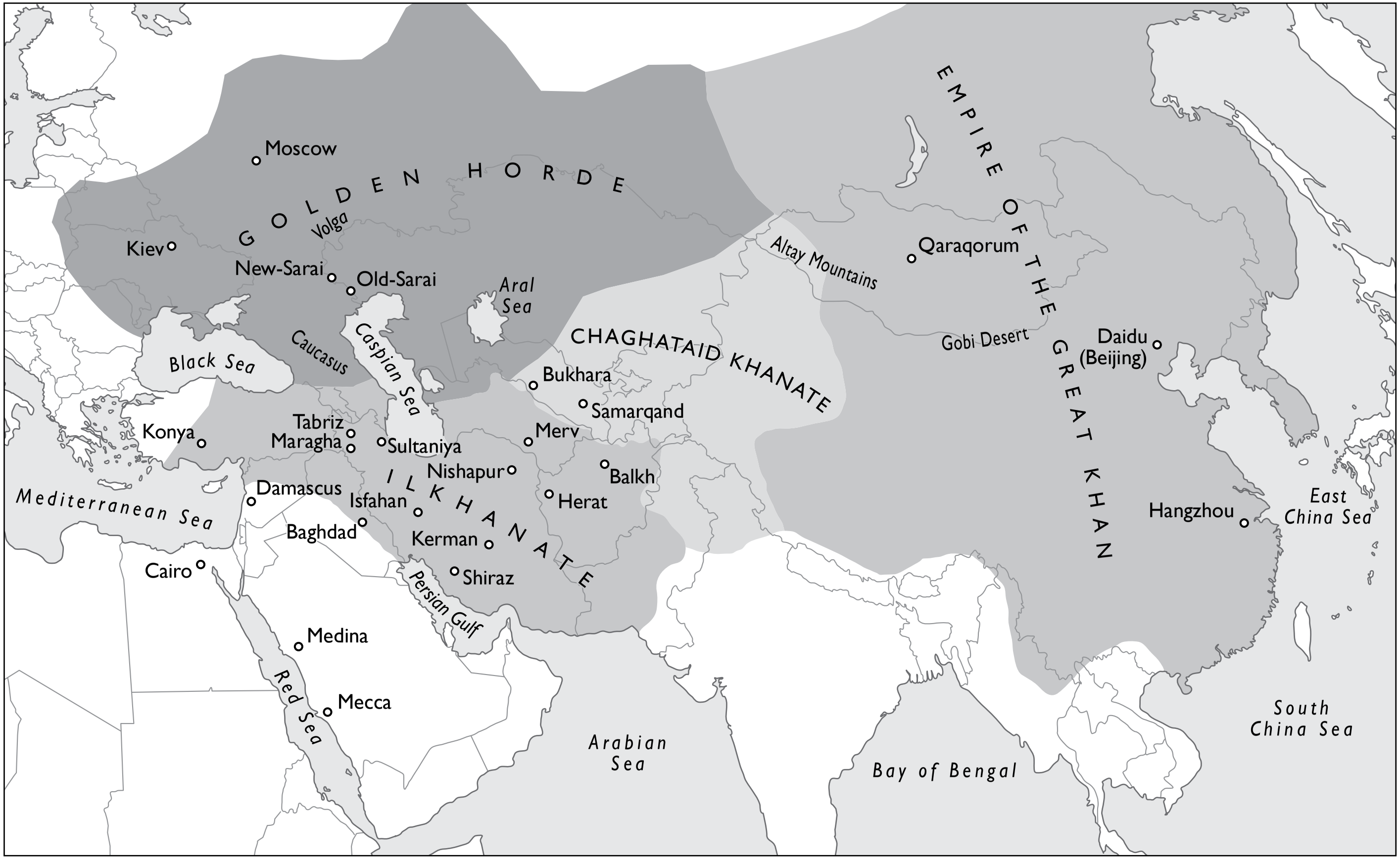
Last but not least, I would like to thank my family for always being by my side during all my years of constantly pursuing my dream of making my passion for history into a profession. But, above all, this project would not have been possible without the tireless support and constant love of my wife Marta Dominguez Diaz and our two kids, Lara and Marco. It is to them that this book is dedicated.

A Note on Transliteration

The lack of a standardised system of transliteration in the field of Mongolian studies always presents a challenge. The transliteration of proper names has been carried out on the understanding that I am not a master of the Mongolian language and that most of the sources used for this research are in Persian rather than Mongolian. In order to help the reader's understanding, the spelling of Mongol and Turkish names has been based on the system adopted by J. A. Boyle in *The Successors of Genghis Khan*. For names that do not appear in this work, I have used W. Thackston's system from his *Jamiʾu't-Tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*. There are, however, some exceptions, most obviously with regard to the use of 'Chingiz Khan' and 'Sorqoqtani Beki', which have been changed to 'Chinggis Khan' and 'Sorghaghtani Beki' respectively. For Arabic and Persian terms, I have followed the transliteration table that appears below for special terms and work titles in the notes and bibliography. However, I have removed diacritics from any proper nouns (names, place names, etc.) and words found in the English dictionary. For those names that only appear in *The Secret History of the Mongols*, I have followed the transliteration used in the Igor de Rachewiltz 2004 edition, with the exception of the Mongolian and Turkish č, which has been replaced with ch. Place names have been given in their current anglicised forms, where applicable, for example Kerman, Yazd and Khurasan. Similarly, terms which have entered the English language, such as Mamluks, sultan, khan, and so on, have been left in their English forms. Dates are generally given in Common Era, but are preceded by their Hegira correlations when appropriate, separated by a dash.

Transliteration Table

Persian	Latin
آ	Ā
ب	b
پ	p
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
چ	ch
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
ژ	zh
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	ʻ
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ک	k
گ	g
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
و	v, w, ū (vowel)
ه	h
ی	y, ī
Vowels	
بَ	a
بِ	e
بُ	o



Map 1 Map of the Mongol Empire



Map 2 Map of the Ilkhanid State 1260–1335

Introduction: The Study of Women in the Mongol Empire

> It is, as medievalists of all kinds are aware, immensely difficult to penetrate the mind-set and thought-processes of men and women who lived centuries ago.
>
> G. R. Hambly, 'Becoming Visible', 1998[1]

Introducing the Khātūns

By 1206, Temüjin, a young Mongol prince, had concluded his military campaigns in the Mongolian steppes, finding himself enthroned by his peers and rivals and renamed Chinggis (usually known as Genghis) Khan from then on. While this date marks the end of a bloody period in Mongolian history, it also symbolises the beginning of an even bloodier era in the history of Eurasia. The Mongol armies, now united under Chinggis Khan would, over the course of three generations, conquer all that lay in their path from the Yellow Sea to the Danube in Central Europe and from Siberia to the Indus. Yet, when speaking of nomadic empires, conquest does not necessarily lead to territorial unity. As soon as Chinggis Khan died in 1227, the conquered territories were divided among his four sons and their descendants, prompting the fragmentation of the empire into four khanates (China, Central Asia, Iran and the Golden Horde of Russia) that would be fighting each other only a few years after the death of Ögetei Khan (d. 1241), first successor of Chinggis Khan.[2]

The Mongol armies did not simply pass through or conquer and withdraw from the territories they defeated, as other nomadic peoples such as the Huns had done before them. Instead, they came to stay, and their women and children followed immediately after the army to join them and settle in the places where the military had succeeded. As these women began to dwell in the growing empire, those belonging to the higher classes and who were married to members of the Chinggisid family began to be addressed by the honorific title of *khātūn* (pl. *khawātīn*; however, I will use the more common Anglicised plural of *khātūns*) to distinguish their higher status, and recognised union with a male ruler, from other

women in the court such as concubines.[3] The word itself is of uncertain origin, possibly coming from old Turkic (or perhaps even the Sogdian language), but it is widely used in medieval Persian and Arabic sources alike. The meaning of the term is 'lady' or 'noblewoman' and had been used to refer to noblewomen long before the Mongols appeared in Central Asia in the early thirteenth century.[4]

This division of class is important for this study. The particularities of the source material that we have for the period of the Mongol domination of Eurasia is conditional on the information that we can obtain about these women. On the one hand, the available sources dealing with the Mongol Empire, being mostly medieval sources, are predominantly male-orientated. This means that information about women is generally provided in a passing reference or is unreliable, because the deeds of women were occasionally used to convey a particular narrative and so any information tended to be biased and full of clichés and stereotypes. On the other hand, when women are mentioned in the sources, they are generally individuals from the highest echelons of society such as queens, princesses or other prominent women in the royal family.[5] In other words, when we do find information about the women of the Mongol Empire, it is always in reference to the *khātūns*, that is, to the elite or prestigious women (be it from a religious, genealogical or political point of view). For this reason, considering the fact that historical chronicles pay most attention to life at court and the martial achievements of the rulers – imperial as well as local – and to the military establishment of the Turco-Mongol conquerors, little space is left for the ordinary people, unless they are portrayed as the victims of tax regimes or the 'passage of armies'.[6]

Consequently, there is an unbalanced representation of women in the sources that is difficult to overcome. However, if we accept this fact for now (at least until new source material sees the light of day) and focus mostly on women connected to the ruling classes, then the Mongol Empire offers a good opportunity to investigate how these women lived and how they exercised their influence over the empire in thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Eurasia. Furthermore, research on women in Eurasian societies in general, and the Mongol Empire in particular, is still in its infancy if compared with the amount of research produced, for example, on women in medieval Europe or China. Hence, this book attempts to offer a view on these courtly women, while recognising the inevitable omission it makes of women from the broader society who have escaped historical record.

Investigating the Khātūns

While much work has been done in the areas of gender studies and women's history, the methodological approach used here, although dealing with both of these disciplines, does not situate itself exclusively within those frameworks. This is to do with the historical period being covered and the type of information that is available in the sources. An approach based on the study of the history of women in general can be useful for this research, but at the same time one has to guard against assuming similarities between women's status in, for example, the early Islamic period in the Middle East and that of the Mongol Empire. Important scholarly contributions have been made to the field and these have helped to enrich the scope of this book.[7] Furthermore, recent studies of women in history have developed several interesting approaches that have something to offer the methodology of the present study, such as the examination of men as husbands and sons and not only as oppressors of women. This type of approach is congruent with a guiding notion of my own research, that the investigation of the *khātūns* contributes not only to the history of Mongol women, but to the general historiography of the Mongol Empire. Most of the theoretical approaches to the study of women in history centre nowadays on practices such as the hijab (veiling), polygamy, marriage, and so on, or the evaluation of prominent female figures of the Prophet Muhammad's family (Khadija, Aisha or Fatima). Although some of these approaches may be useful, most of them cannot simply be extrapolated to the Mongol Empire. Most research on early Islamic women has been based on legal and sacred texts, which provide a different type of account from the chronicles being used in this work.[8] Most of the theoretical frameworks used in the study of women in Middle Eastern history are confined to the modern period, so it would be inappropriate to apply them to women in the Mongol Empire, not only because of the obvious time distance but also because of the particularities of Mongol women as members of an Altaic nomadic society. Therefore, it would be methodologically inappropriate to look at the *khātūns* exclusively from the perspective of gender studies.

The method selected for this research is based on cultural/intellectual history complemented by textual, socio-historical and contextual analyses of the primary source material. Our concept of culture is a broad one, including not only the intellectual products of the society in question, but also the political, religious and artistic activities of women under Mongol rule.[9] Cultural history has been resurrected following criticism of the New Cultural History movement of the 1970s, which underlined the importance

of the individual in society, the construction of identity, the representation of gender and the ideological justification of political institutions, among other things.[10] Though they have been criticised, many of these theoretical concepts are applicable today in historical research, with present-day cultural historians using them in much of their analysis.[11] Although Peter Burke has suggested that the influence of New Cultural History is coming to an end in many fields,[12] the Mongol Empire is a subject area where the study of cultural or intellectual history is just beginning.[13] Many of the areas in which cultural history has contributed to our knowledge and understanding of the past – areas such as economic history, political history, intellectual history and social history – have not been fully explored in relation to the Mongols.[14]

It is also important to be aware of a masculine bias in the sources and to recognise the need for an exhaustive comparison of source material in order to minimise the effects of subjectivity. Such concerns have been underlined by scholars such as Fatima Mernissi, Rifaat Hassan and Barbara Stowasser, who were dealing mostly with the Hadiths and Quranic literature.[15] When approaching medieval sources, it is very difficult to avoid this masculine bias, since women are normally referred to in terms of their relationship to men: as 'wives of', 'daughters of' and so on. Therefore, the sources tend to tell us more about the male perception of women than about the women themselves.[16] To tackle this problem, it is necessary to examine all the available sources and to be extremely careful in analysing the political, economic and social contexts in which the authors were writing. Furthermore, a comprehensive interpretation of the data obtained from diverse types of text, such as chronicles, hagiographies and accounts of travels, allows us to suggest patterns for the social perception of women in different periods and places. This framework should be complemented with textual analyses of the sources in order to clarify to whom each text was addressed, and to take into account the possible motivations of the author. Furthermore, each material obtained needs to be examined within its own socio-historical context. As John Tosh has said: 'One of the most illuminating ways into the past is to focus on a specific source and to reconstruct how it came into being by all available means – through textual analysis, related documents from the same source, contemporary comment and so on'.[17]

Through textual analysis and the framework of cultural history, we hope to be able to achieve a better understanding of the mindset of Mongol women. This area is only recently being explored and there are important methodological and documentary limitations to be borne in mind. Nevertheless, the particularities of the Mongol Empire and the rela-

tive abundance of sources for the period do offer a good initial basis for research into the role of the *khātūns* in the empire's Eurasian and Middle Eastern domains. The historiographic characteristics of the sources, such as the context in which a particular document was produced, the motivation behind the production of the text and the particular circumstances of a given author, will be considered throughout this book. Special reference in this regard should be made to the Persian material, which constitutes the greater part of the sources analysed here. In addition, although the main focus of this work is not to develop a historiographical account of the period, the characteristics of a given text and the bias contained within it will be considered when interpreting a particular event or piece of information.

Studying Women in the Mongol Empire: a Literary Overview

While studies on the history of women in the Middle East have been developing since the 1940s, research on this topic is a relatively new phenomenon when it comes to Mongolian studies.[18] Despite the appearance of some recent studies, there has been little debate on the role of women in medieval Eurasian society. Historians in the first half of the twentieth century, though being, in the eyes of modern historians, 'old fashioned' in their approach, opened up new fields of research. This was the case with Douglas M. Dunlop, who in 1944 published an article focusing on the Kerait tribe and its relationship with Eastern Christianity and with the story of Prester John.[19] In trying to trace the history of this nomadic tribe, Dunlop came across some of the most influential women of the Mongol Empire. The second part of his article concentrated on identifying those women and providing some observations. Dunlop was able to distinguish seven women from the sources, five of whom belonged to the Kerait tribe. However, since the article was not primarily concerned with the role of women, the paper is only useful as a first step.[20]

Dunlop's work was followed and expanded upon in the 1970s when two articles devoted exclusively to Mongol women were published, one in English (by Morris Rossabi) and one in French (by Paul Ratchnevsky).[21] Rossabi's article quickly became the most important study regarding female roles in the Mongol Empire and it has since been quoted in almost every publication on Mongol history. Both articles made an equally important contribution to the field and brought to light some relevant aspects of the role of women in Mongol society. They recognised the fundamental role played by women in the empire and agreed on the reason for this crucial position in society: gender cooperation was essential

for survival in the 'subsistence economy of nomadic pastoralism'.[22] By focusing specifically on female roles, these two articles went further than Dunlop. On the one hand, the article by Ratchnevsky follows a thematic structure based on an analysis of the role of Mongol women in the domestic economy, in marriage, and in religious and political life. Rossabi, on the other hand, based his research on a chronological description of the *khātūns.* Both scholars used similar source material, with the exception of a more extensive use of Chinese sources by Rossabi. However, their use of Persian material seems to have been infrequent, since only the main chronicles written by Rashid al-Din and Juvayni are mentioned, while the majority of written testimonies left by the prolific Ilkhanid historians are neglected entirely.

The first attempt to study women in Iran under the Mongols was made by Shirin Bayani.[23] The first part of this pioneering work focuses on women in Iran before the Mongols, followed by a chapter dedicated to marriage and family organisation. The third part is devoted to the analysis of different female institutions in order explore the place of Mongol upper-class women in Iranian society. The final chapter contains short biographies of the most significant *khātūns* of the period such as Sorghaghtani Beki and Töregene Khatun. Though this is a good introduction to the topic, it used limited new material from the Iranian regional chronicles. Ann K. S. Lambton, on the other hand, offers a more in-depth study of women under the Mongol Empire, focusing only on the Iranian and Persian-speaking territories.[24] In one chapter of her book, on the history of Persia under the Saljuqs and Mongols, Lambton describes female participation in politics, society and religion in medieval Iran.[25] The most valuable element of this work is the extensive identification of the *khātūns* of the ruling families of Persia from the eleventh to the fourteenth century. In addition to some references to the social role of women under these two dynasties, Lambton's use of the sources and her recognition of the continuity of social patterns in medieval Persian society makes this book one of the fundamental secondary sources used in the development of the present study. Similar in style, Bahriye Üçok published a biographical account of some Turkic women who lived in Iran under Mongol rule.[26] Although it mostly narrates the lives of these women, this study may be seen as another indication of the scholarly awareness of these *khātūns*' roles in medieval times.

The decade following Lambton's book saw Mongolian studies accepting the established picture of women under Mongol rule in Iran.[27] However, research on women in Mongol China continued in the late 1980s and early 1990s thanks to the contribution of Jennifer Holmgren's work on marriage practices in the Yuan dynasty.[28] Her observations on

the levirate system and detailed study of the exchange between the Han Chinese populations and their steppe conquerors opened up a new perspective on the role of women in the Mongol Empire in China, which was followed by Bettine Birge's work in 2002.[29] It was not until 1998 when Gavin Hambly compiled a book on women in the Islamic world that the interest in the study of women in medieval Islamic history recovered some interest among scholars.[30] In the introduction, he rightly points out the extensive material available in the field and the favourable possibilities for further research offered by the topic.[31] Almost simultaneously, an article was published by James D. Ryan analysing the relationships between the Pope and the women of the Mongol court in Iran, which sheds some light on the role that women played during the period of diplomatic contact between the Mongols and Europe in the second half of the thirteenth century.[32]

Only one year after Hambly had underlined the relevance that the study of medieval women in Iran may have for the history of the period, Charles Melville published a short but excellent work on the final years of the Ilkhanate.[33] Although Melville's intention was not specifically to research the role of women in Iran, he found that, during the reign of Abu Sa^cid (d. 1335), their participation in the final years of Mongol rule was a constant.[34] Although I have suggested elsewhere differences 'in the form' of women's influence in politics before and after the mid-thirteenth century,[35] it is important to emphasise the continuity of the political influence of women across the empire from the time of Chinggis Khan until the end of the Mongol rule in Iran.

In 2003, at a conference held in Toronto, George Zhao presented a paper on the marital connections between the Yuan dynasty of China and the Koryo dynasty of Korea.[36] He was the first to contest some of the arguments stated in the articles from the 1970s mentioned above, where Rossabi claims that the daughters of Qubilai were not as influential as his mother and wife.[37] This claim justified, to some extent, Rossabi's omission of the Khan's female offspring from his 1979 article. However, Zhao challenged this argument by looking at the official history of the Korean dynasty, where references to the influence of Mongol women are recorded.[38] This fact, together with a re-examination of the *Koryosa*,[39] a well-known source among historians of Korea, are good examples of the type of further research that can be undertaken in the field of women under Mongol rule. Finally, in 2006, George Lane dedicated an entire chapter to women in his *Daily Life in the Mongol Empire*.[40] This work is a good introduction to the field and constantly refers to the original sources. It is more descriptive than analytical, but it has the privilege of being the first

work since Lambton's to dedicate an entire chapter to women, indicating a tendency in Mongolian Studies to move towards a framework of cultural history, as predicted by David Morgan.[41]

A number of the studies that have preceded this book have been of capital importance as the first studies to be fully dedicated to the study of women in the Mongol Empire from a more holistic point of view. First, above all others, is the pioneering work of Karin Quade-Reutter, who in 2003 submitted her doctoral research on women in Iran during the Mongol and Timurid periods. Unfortunately, this dissertation was never made into a monograph, which has limited its accessibility for scholars as well as the general public. The work is not only a good contribution to the study of the political influence of women in medieval Iran, but provides extensive use of original Persian sources. The scope of the study concentrates exclusively on Iran and, therefore, it does not engage in the general debate on the role of women in the Mongol Empire as a whole. In addition, this study brings into the picture the role of non-Chinggisid royal women from regions such as Kerman and Fars and attempts a survey of the Timurid period, where the sources are thinner on the ground, but a good number of influential women are identified. Overall, with Quade-Reutter's meticulous scrutiny of the sources and a clear chronological presentation of the outcomes, this work prepared the ground for anyone wanting to work on women in the Ilkhanate.

Second, another dissertation was submitted more recently (2007) in Turkey by Nilgün Dalkesen, who analysed gender roles in nomadic societies in Central Asia and Anatolia from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. With regard to the Mongol period, her research focuses mainly on gender relationships and on the contradiction inherent in the coexistence of Islamic law (*Shari*ᶜ*ah*) and Mongol customary law (*yasaq*). Although different in approach and scope to the present study, Dalkesen's use of Turkish literature and her focus on Central Asia and the Middle East as an integrated space are useful contributions to the field. Finally, in 2008, George Zhao published his monograph based on his doctoral dissertation on Mongol women in the Mongol Empire with a particular focus on the Yuan dynasty of China.[42] The book mostly analyses the marriage alliances established by the Chinggisids with the different Mongol tribes. Zhao suggests that there were two types of marriage alliance: one-way and two-way. This classification allows Zhao to differentiate between those populations that married their women to the Mongol royal family but did not marry Chinggisid women in return (these were the Öngüt, the Uyghurs, the Koreans and the Chinese) and those that conducted marriages in both directions (the Onggirat, Ikries and Oyrat). This work is an interesting

study that shares certain topics with the present book (especially with Chapter 2), but, instead of looking at the development of the Mongol Empire in Western Asia, it focuses its attention on the East.

Since 2011, when the bulk of the research for the present study was done, a number of interesting works in this field have been published;[43] specifically, Yonatan Brack's article on the alleged travel of a Mongol woman to Mecca and Medina to perform the hajj pilgrimage is of utmost importance.[44] This is the unique account of El Qutlugh Khatun, a daughter of Abaqa Khan, performing the Islamic pilgrimage in the fourteenth century. The case study not only highlights the interesting point of view provided by Mamluk sources, but also offers some interesting insights into the Islamisation of Mongol women and their religious affiliation after the conversion of Ghazan Khan to Islam in 1294.[45] Also relevant to this short survey of the sources is the article by Hend Gilli-Elewy that appeared in 2012.[46] Her article focuses on the final decades of the Ilkhanate and explores the relationship between the Islamisation of the Mongols in Iran, the persistence of Mongol traditional values and the fragmentation of political power in the region after the death of Abu Sa^{c}id in 1335. In this context, she focuses on the role of women in this period, revisiting some of the issues addressed by Charles Melville in his work mentioned above. While doing the final corrections to this book, two new important publications came to my knowedge which I tried to incorporate into this work at the last minute. On the one hand, the last article by Anne Broadbridge on the intermarriage practices of the Oyrats and the Chinggisids offers a good overview of the role played by women of this tribe in the history of the Mongol Empire.[47] On the other, I have used especially chapter 1 in the recently submitted PhD dissertation by Yonatan Brack, who investigates deeply the political succession of the Ilkhanate, where women played a fundamental role.[48] Finally, I have published a number of academic articles on the role of women in Anatolia, Iran and Central Asia that have contributed to the field in recent years and complement the present, more in-depth study on women in Ilkhanid Iran.[49]

Sources for the Study of Women in the Mongol Empire

Studying the history of the Mongol Empire, given the magnitude of its conquests, inevitably means investigating the history of not only the conquering nomads but also the societies that interacted with them either as allies, foes or subject peoples.[50] The extent of the Mongol domains and the impact of conquest on the mindset of the conquered peoples make the period rich in terms of the written material available, while also presenting

a problem over the way in which the sources present their historical narratives.[51]

With the exception of the small number mentioned below, those who were defeated and conquered by the Mongols or who were at the service of a new Mongol ruler produced the vast majority of the source material on the Mongol Empire. Consequently, the information provided by the sources is extremely biased and needs to be handled with caution. In order to minimise this agency, we have tried, in the course of this research, to contextualise these works and whenever possible to look at them as products of the time, place and circumstance of the author. This section does not attempt to be a full description of the sources used in this study, but rather aims to highlight the most important references and point out the special value that certain sources had for particular areas of the research. How varied the sources are for this particular period is self-evident from the organisation of this section, and this variety provides an opportunity to compare and contrast different views and interpretations of certain phenomena. The following summary includes only those sources more relevant for the present study and, therefore, some sources, while important for the study of the Mongol Empire but with less impact regarding the role of women, have been left out of this short account.

Persian sources

Across the different chapters in this book, we make special use of Persian sources. In order to present them in an organised form, they could be grouped into three main categories. First, we include in this research those works that can be considered official court chronicles produced in different periods of the Mongol Empire. Despite lacking the Chinese institutional arrangements for the compilation of histories, Persian historians of the time were nonetheless able to produce an important variety of 'official chronicles'.[52] Although not the earliest to be produced, the most comprehensive account of the Mongols is given in the *Jami^c al-tawarikh* of Rashid al-Din (d. 1318).[53] Originally from a Jewish background, the author of this book converted to Islam and had a meteoric career in the Mongol administration until he became the Grand Vizier of Ghazan Khan (r. 1295–1304).[54] While not pretending to go into the historiography produced by Rashid al-Din or the legacy of his work in any depth, it is important to underline the fact that the production of this massive – and expensive – work was most probably the fruit of a collective effort rather than an individual enterprise.[55] The work was commissioned by two successive Mongol Ilkhans (Ghazan and Öljeitü), which has dual consequences for this work as a source that

needs to be borne in mind throughout this book.[56] On the one hand, such proximity to the Mongol court certainly conditioned the Persian vizier's writing with regard to the construction of a 'Mongol past'. As we will see later on, some passages of his history clearly exhibit favouritism towards a particular Mongol faction (mostly the Toluid line) or show bias whilst evaluating the deeds of, for example, his patron Ghazan Khan. However, he is also 'remarkably frank about the shortcomings of early Mongol rule in Persia, but he is seldom overtly judgmental, offering little by way of personal opinion'.[57] On the other hand, the same proximity to the court provides this work with first-hand insights into Mongol tradition and contemporary events across the empire that are hardly present in any other contemporary account of the Mongols.

This close relationship that Rashid al-Din had with the Mongol nobles in Iran (both men and women) allowed him to include information in his chronicle that is unique in detail and scope. The knowledge contained in this work is of enormous importance for the study of the Mongol Empire as a whole, but especially for this book in particular. The author's detailed description of women not only provides us with their names and genealogical connections – which in itself is particularly uncommon – but is also useful in elucidating the role of Mongol women in society from a Persian perspective. Moreover, the interest in genealogy expressed in the *Jāmi^c al-tawarikh* can also be observed in another work produced by the same author a few years later. The *Shu^{c}ab-i panjganah* is a compendium of genealogical trees describing the family links of the Franks, Mongols, Chinese, Arabs/Muslims and Jews from their origins to the contemporary time of the author.[58] Perhaps because there is only one surviving manuscript of the work, it has received limited attention by historians so far.[59] This work offers a valuable complement to the information in the *Jami^c al-tawarikh*, although, with regard to women, it does not add much to what we can find in Rashid al-Din's first work. In addition, a later work also follows this tradition of genealogical record-keeping among the Turco-Mongol populations. The anonymous *Mu^{c}izz al-ansab* was completed in 1426 under the Timurid dynasty in Central Asia and became fairly popular in India under the Moghuls from the sixteenth century onwards.[60] Both manuscripts prove to be important complementary sources for the history of the Mongol Empire and its successor states, particularly with regard to genealogical connections and family alliances.[61]

Rashid al-Din relied extensively in his account of the early empire on the work of another Persian bureaucrat, ^{c}Ata Malik Juvayni. His work, *Tarkih-i jahan-gusha*,[62] covers the period from the rise of Chinggis Khan up to the invasion of Hülegü in the Middle East, based mostly on the

author's life experience at court. Juvayni's account of women is selective, lacking Rashid al-Din's detailed and systematic references to them. Although he was writing for the Mongols and trying to portray them as the liberators of Islam rather than, for example, the Ismailis, he has a more 'moralising tone' when dealing with the conquest of Iran than Rashid al-Din does.[63] Unlike Rashid al-Din, Juvayni was at the service of the Mongols in the early stage of the empire, during the reign of Möngke (r. 1251–9) and up to the reign of Abaqa (r. 1265–82).[64] Mostly based in Khurasan at the beginning of his career, and then in Iraq, he presumably had less direct contact than Rashid al-Din had, not only with those Mongol women who came to Iran in the thirteenth century, but also with those *khātūns* who were born and raised in Iran. The *Tarkih-i jahan-gusha* is further limited with regard to women by the fact that the account ends before the fall of Baghdad in 1258. The nature of the information is different too, in that Juvayni only mentions the ladies of the Mongol court when there is an anecdote to be told or an event to be recounted in which a given woman happens to be involved. Although fewer women can be found in the *Tarkih-i jahan-gusha* than in the *Jami*ᶜ *al-tawarikh*, the information is nevertheless sometimes richer with regard to female involvement in society. Both authors were close to the Mongol court and participated in the administration of the Ilkhanate and, consequently, they tended to favour any specific line of descent from Chinggis Khan (the Toluids) for whom they both worked. The *Tarkih-i jahan-gusha* not only offers a more comprehensive description of the political events but also gives a unique insight into the transformation of Mongol society in its passage from the steppes to Iran. Juvayni's work is of particular value for his contemporary account of the early period of Mongol rule, when the whole of the empire was united and when women were in charge of the administration of the realm. Finally, Baidawi's short *Nizam al-tawarikh* somehow fills the gap between these two major historical works.[65] However, despite being one of the main sources of the period, its information regarding Mongol women is limited.[66]

Other chronicles of the period form an important contrast to the 'official versions' offered by Juvayni and Rashid al-Din. Among them, the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* is an account contemporary with that of Juvayni.[67] Composed by Minhaj al-Din Saraj Juzjani, the author's motivation was different from that of the other two in the sense that he was a victim of the first Mongol invasion of the Middle East. Forced into exile from Iran, he did not need to emphasise or justify the presence of the Mongols; his bias came from the opposite direction, offering an alternative account of the invasion.[68] Juzjani's distance from the Mongol court may have limited

the information he received about the *khātūns*, and so he tells us less about them.

In the early fourteenth century, the Shirazi Vassaf submitted parts of his own history of the Ilkhanate to Ghazan Khan (d. 1304) and later chapters to his successor Öljeitü (d. 1316).[69] Although coming from a protégé of Rashid al-Din, this source adds important information about the administration of the provinces in southern Iran, which makes it relevant to any examination of the role of women in the Ilkhanate beyond the Mongol court.[70] Similarities exist between Vassaf's personal career and that of Hamd Allah Mustawfi (d. 1344), another productive chronicler of the fourteenth century.[71] In this book, we focus mostly on three of his works, which include the *Tarikh-i guzida* and the *Zafar-nama* (his more historical accounts) and the *Nuzhat al-qulub*, chiefly dedicated to the cosmography and geography of Iran and Central Asia.[72]

The most detailed account of the Mongol court after the death of Ghazan Khan is provided by Kashani's *Tarikh-i Uljaytu*, which follows the narrative structure of Rashid al-Din's work, making it especially interesting for its genealogical connections and for the accounts of female personalities in the court of Öljeitü.[73] Other historical works in Persian during the Mongol period are also considered, despite the fact that some of them, such as Banakati's history, cannot match the amount of information regarding women provided by those already mentioned. Nevertheless, together with Shabankaraʾi's (d. 1358) *Majma^{c} al-ansab*, Banakati offers useful information about the Ilkhanate after 1304.[74]

From the fourteenth century onwards, other major chronicles also incorporated information about the Mongol period. A short chronicle about the history of the Mongols in Iran also became available recently. The text appeared as part of a *majmu'a* (manuscript containing different works) and has been attributed to the famous scholar Qutb al-Din Shirazi (d. 1311).[75] The account is arranged by years including the reigns of Hulegu, Abaqa and Teguder, leaving the narrative incomplete around the year 1284.[76] Although short in length, this new chronicle has some interesting references to women as we will see in Chapter 3. Despite the ending of the Ilkhanid dynasty in 1335, those entities emerging after the disintegration of Mongol rule in Iran and the subsequent reunification under Tamerlane looked back to the Mongols for legitimation of their rule. The information regarding women in these sources is selective and focuses on some female personages who lived in the last years of a unified Ilkhanate and in the period of political fragmentation that followed. In this context, the works of Hafiz-i Abru (d. 1430),[77] Khwandamir's *Tarikh-i habib al-siyar* and the later Central Asian *Tarikh-i Rashidi* are useful, not only to

contrast with the information of more contemporary accounts but also to provide some insights into the 'legacy' that Mongol rule left in the area.[78]

A second group of Persian sources used in this research include those chronicles produced by the Mongols' local subject dynasties: these are generally referred to as 'regional histories'.[79] Chronicles composed in regions of Iran that were governed by women in the Mongol period are given special attention. In this regard, some local histories of Fars provide useful information on the local administration of the province and give a different perspective from that of the sources produced at the central court.[80] Similarly, the province of Kerman under the Qutlughkhanid dynasty is closely analysed, not only for its close ties with the Ilkhanid court, but also for being one of the regions ruled by women in the thirteenth century. The information provided by the anonymous *Tarikh-i Shahi-yi Qara-Khitaʾiyan* is somehow unique in this respect, since it was commissioned by a woman to explain the history of her mother's reign.[81] Finally, local chronicles produced in other territories dependent on the Mongols, such as Anatolia, offer a good insight 'from the sidelines' on the history of the Ilkhanate in general and of women in particular. Interesting data about women is contained in the works of Ibn Bibi, Aqsarayi and the anonymous historian of Konya, just to mention the most famous of them.[82]

The third and final category of Persian source material provides a different type of information marked by its nature. In the thirteenth century, and particularly in the early fourteenth century, the Middle East saw the expansion of Sufism and the gradual organisation of Sufis around orders (*ṭuruq*), which progressively produced a particular genre of literature not meant to be strictly historical but rather accounts of religious personalities or saints, part of a growing mystical approach to Islam in this period. The authors of this type of work, known as 'hagiographic literature', tried to incorporate verifiable facts in order to make themselves credible to the reader, whom they were trying to attract to a particular Sufi master.[83] Such sources are particularly relevant to this research in the sense that they are instructive about the daily pursuits and individual participation of women in the religious life of Mongol Iran, facets of female life that are generally not covered in the historical chronicles. Thus, such works as the *Safwat al-safa* and *Manaqib al-ʿarifin* complement what we can glean from other sources with respect to the lives of women in the Mongol Empire.[84] In addition, some occasional use of Persian sources produced during the Saljuq period is also included here in order to find patterns of continuity and/or transformation in Iran before and after the arrival of the Mongols.[85]

Mongol and Chinese sources

It might sound like a paradox that, in the study of the Mongol Empire, the number of sources written by the Mongols themselves is rather limited. This limited amount of written source materials of Mongol origin is related to the fact that the Mongols were a nomadic society without a written language until Chinggis Khan himself ordered that Mongolian should be written in Uyghur script. Despite this policy, the main Mongol sources we do have did not come to us in Uyghur script, but in a phonetic transcription of Mongolian into Chinese characters.[86] This text, generally referred to as *The Secret History of the Mongols*, has the privilege of being the only surviving source written not only for the Mongols but also by the Mongols during the time of the Mongol Empire. This characteristic makes it especially useful in light of our attempts to examine the role of women in pre-imperial Mongolia.[87] A later Mongol source known as the *Altan Tobchi* is also occasionally used here to explore the transmission of some of *The Secret History*'s stories among the Mongols themselves.[88] Because it was written in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, when most of the Mongol population had converted to Buddhism, the period of Chinggis Khan and his successors is generally described through a Buddhist framework, making the account potentially prone to a particular bias.

The most valuable source of information about the Mongols composed by Chinese authors is the *Yuan Shih*, or 'Official history of the Yuan dynasty of China' (1279–1368). It was composed during the early years of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) following the Chinese tradition, according to which each new dynasty of the empire had a duty to write the history of its predecessors. Although it is mostly limited to a description of political and family facts, the section dealing with the biographies of the princesses and empresses is the most relevant to this book.[89] Apart from this official Chinese history of the Mongol dynasty, there are some other sources related to this period available in translation. For example, the account of the trip of the Taoist master Chan Chun from his monastery in China to Central Asia to meet Chinggis Khan, which has been translated by Arthur Waley.[90] Further, some Chinese ambassadorial reports from the Sung Dynasty to Chinggis Khan have also arrived to us and can be found in translation. They contain limited information on Mongol women but serve as a good Eastern view on the Mongols that complement the western views left by the European travellers[91]

European sources

The Mongol expansion across Eurasia triggered not only fear but also curiosity among the European kingdoms. Kings, merchants and the Pope himself all sent several embassies to the Mongol territories in order to establish diplomatic contact, forge economic enterprises, and (presumably) spy on these unknown nomads from the East.[92] Among this group of accounts, Marco Polo's *Il Milione* is arguably the most researched and influential among Europeans.[93] Polo's popularity means that different editions of his book have been available in translation and annotated by scholars since the end of the nineteenth century. Two editions of this work have mainly been used in this study: the first is Sir Henry Yule's translation, published in the late nineteenth century, and the second is Paul Pelliot and Arthur C. Moule's edition, which was published in the first half of the twentieth century.[94] Despite the antiquity of these two editions, they remain, in my view, the most complete and comprehensive translations and annotations to date.

Whilst Marco Polo's main purpose was to leave an account of his adventure and suggest that the Asian continent had commercial potential, other European travellers had a different agenda. Friars and monks also ventured into the Mongol Empire and left different accounts of the lives of the nomads. The most comprehensive are those left by John Piano de Carpini and William of Rubruck, whose narratives seem orientated towards a more 'anthropological' perspective.[95] The information provided by these two clerics is of special relevance to this research, since the encounters they had with Mongol women provide us with unique first-hand descriptions of these ladies. Other European accounts from a later period than that of Carpini and Rubruck also exist. For example, the report of Friar Odoric de Pordenone (between 1316 and 1330) and the associated collection of documents relating to the diplomatic exchanges between the Vatican, European kingdoms and the Ilkhanate are useful complements.[96] Finally, the Mongol occupation of the Middle East offered a potential ally to some European kingdoms against a common enemy: the Mamluks of Egypt. The diplomatic contacts between the Mongols and Europe and some of the letters exchanged between them provide valuable information regarding European–Mongol relations.[97]

The accounts by medieval European travellers to the Mongol territories share certain characteristics in the sense that all of them generally carry a bias in favour of the faith of the traveller (Catholic Christian) and against that of the people they encounter (Muslims, Buddhists, Eastern Christians, shamanists, and so on). They tend to underline the 'impure' practices of

the 'unbelievers', sometimes overemphasising them, or are too quick to accord authenticity to the negative legends and stories they have been told. This is linked to the unavoidable 'limits of perception' of these travellers, outwardly marked by the routes they took, the people they met and the access they had (or did not have) to reliable sources of information. At the same time, it should be remembered that the target readerships were different for the 'religious accounts' by the priests sent out by the Pope and the 'secular' tales written by merchant travellers such as Marco Polo. On the one hand, the former group tried to render an image of the Mongols that was realistic (with the intention of providing reliable information to the Pope about, say, the chances of a Mongol conversion to Christianity), whilst at the same time seeking to reinforce the 'superior piousness' of Christianity. On the other hand, the latter group was less judgemental in religious matters but tended to highlight the business opportunities of their enterprise whilst stressing the dangers they had to go through in order to succeed in their endeavours.

Eastern Christian sources

The Mongol invasions of the Middle East had a particular impact upon Christian communities of the region. The accounts produced by Georgian, Armenian and Nestorian clerics generally give a mixed picture of the newcomers, portraying them either as ruthless or as saviours of Christianity vis-à-vis the Muslim majority of the region. Such diverging views generated biased narrations which occasionally exaggerated the degree of Mongol sympathy for Christianity or simply invented the conversion of certain members of the royal family. Mongol women, too, were the objects of such Christian bias, sometimes being falsely portrayed as ill-treating Muslims and sometimes being depicted as Christian saints (in some Syriac iconography).[98] Ever aware of such bias, we can nevertheless glean valuable material which complements information from other sources produced by other communities.

Some useful chronicles from these Christian communities have come down to us, which were meant either to underline the struggles or heroic deeds of a particular Christian kingdom or to serve as propaganda to attract Western kingdoms to a new crusade in the Middle East. Georgian and Russian sources can be seen as examples of the former tendency, while Armenian accounts generally reflect the latter, more covert, intention.[99] The paradigmatic example of this propagandistic tendency is the Armenian Frère Hayton's *Fleur des étoiles d'Orient* that appeared in Poitiers at the beginning of the fourteenth century and which contains

an account of the Mongol invasions.[100] Apart from Hayton's book, other Armenian sources have come to us, complementing the Eastern Christian view of the Mongols and their arrival to the Middle East.[101]

Finally, special mention should be made of the universal history written by the Jacobite monk Bar Hebraeus.[102] This account covers the development of humankind from Adam to the death of the author in 1286. In a way, this source is remarkably different from the rest of the available Eastern Christian sources because it appears to be conceived for a broader public, borne out by the fact that the author was asked to produce an Arabic version of his Syriac chronicles.[103] Bar Hebraeus's account of Christian women at court is important to our discussion, as he provides an insight into the religiosity[104] of many Mongol women, albeit coloured by his own point of view.[105] As was the case with Rashid al-Din, his close relationship with the Mongols and the *khātūns* at court provided him with valuable information, though at the same time it affected the objectivity of his historical writing.[106] Something similar is provided by another Eastern Christian narrative about the trip from China to Europe through the Middle East of an envoy from Qubilai to the Pope and the kingdoms of Europe. The journey of the monks Rabban Markos (then patriarch Yahbalaha III) and Rabban Sauma to the West is interesting not only for his description of Europe through the eyes of a Mongol subject, but also for the detailed account he provides of the internal affairs of the Ilkhanate when he passed through Iran on his way from China.[107] Altogether, Eastern Christian sources pay particular attention to Christian Mongol women, which allows us to obtain a more reliable picture of the status of these women in the Middle East, because it can be contrasted with that derived from the Persian-Muslim sources.

Arabic sources

In the last few decades, Arabic sources have been used more intensively for studying the history of the Mongol Empire.[108] The majority of these sources were produced by historians living in Mamluk Egypt and, as a consequence, the image portrayed of the Mongols is rather negative. However, while hostile towards the Mongols of Iran, some of these sources do provide valuable information about the Mongols of the Golden Horde, who, through sharing with the sultans of Egypt an antagonism towards the Ilkhans, became the Mamluks' allies in the mid-thirteenth century.[109] Further, for the early period of the Mongol invasions, some Ayyubid sources have been made available in translation, which generally link the history of the Crusades with the arrival of the Mongols.[110]

These sources are mainly chronicles or biographical dictionaries

produced in the Mamluk territories with useful information on relations between the Ilkhanate and the Mamluks of Egypt.[111] Despite the fact that some evidence suggests that a number of Mongol women went to the Mamluk realm as wives and that some Mamluk refugees in the Ilkhanate married Mongol women, the nature of the information about Mongol women is different from the information provided by Persian accounts.[112] For example, some texts written or attributed to Ibn al-Fuwati provide us with a view of the sack of Baghdad that is useful in filling the gap left by Persian historiography on the matter, where the description of the fall of the caliphate is used to save the image of the Mongols vis-à-vis their Muslim subjects.[113] Further, al-Furat's account of the diplomatic relationships between the Mamluks, the Mongols and the Christian kingdoms of Europe is especially important for the early period of the Ilkhanate.[114] Al-Yunini's works on the Mongol invasion of Syria provide interesting insights into the life of Mamluk Syria on the eve of Ghazan's invasion and the occupation.[115] However, beyond the useful contextualisation provided by these sources, the amount of information specifically referring to Mongol *khātūns* is rather limited; meanwhile, interesting work on Mamluk women of Turkish origin has been done.[116]

Apart from those of the Mamluk kingdom, other Arabic sources are fundamental to complementing the Persian and Christian views of Mongol women. Among them, particular attention is paid to the *Travels of Ibn Battuta* and its description of the Mongol territories.[117] Unlike some of the Mamluk historians, who wrote their accounts without ever leaving the Mamluk territories, the Maghrebi traveller Ibn Battuta had the chance to establish a close relationship with, for example, women in the Golden Horde, leaving us an informative account about them and on their involvement in the daily lives of the nomads.

In this book, the use of Arabic sources in general, and Mamluk sources in particular, is not as extensive as the use of Persian sources. The reasons for this are mainly that the primary aim of this book is to investigate not only the status of Mongol women in Ilkhanid Iran but also the way in which they were perceived by those living in the territories that the Mongols had conquered. To look at how these Mongol women were perceived from Mamluk Egypt would be an interesting point of view, for sure, but it is one that unfortunately could not be included in this research.

This Book

Despite more than a century of Mongol-Persian scholarship, the topic of women in the Mongol Empire has not been investigated in any depth.

Hoping to correct this oversight, this study, organised thematically, focuses specifically on the role and status of women in the politics, economy and religions of the Mongol Empire, with special reference to the Mongol dominion in Iran (Ilkhanate) between 1256 and 1335. As each theme is examined, this book attempts to show how the status and role of women were transformed when the Mongols conquered the Middle East and Central Asia in the mid-thirteenth century.

Since the Mongol Empire originated in the Mongolian Steppe, some aspects of pre-imperial Mongolia should also be examined in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of the subject. With this idea in mind, Chapter 1 focuses on three main historical periods to consider the status of women, from the point of the Mongols' foundational myth to the period before a young Mongol prince called Temüjin was proclaimed as Chinggis Khan. The initial section in this chapter looks at how pre-imperial nomadic women are represented in early imperial Mongol sources in an attempt to identify how the Mongols understood the role of women in their own society. Next, we explore the particular role played by Temüjin's mother and first wife during his rise to power. Finally, we dedicate the last section in this chapter to reviewing the political role of women in Eurasia before being conquered by the Mongols. All three sections attempt to provide a historical precedent that helps to understand the sudden accession of Mongol *khātūns* to the throne of the Mongol Empire during its period of unity (1206–60).

With these precedents established and analysed, Chapter 2 goes on to explore the period in which women's political influence reached its peak in the Mongol Empire. It pays special attention to the regency of Töregene Khatun (r. 1241–6), suggesting that her rule was not a simple interregnum, but rather a full political endeavour with a pre-established agenda and legitimised by an important section of the Mongol nobility. The second part in this chapter considers the political involvement of Sorghaghtani Beki, a woman who did not acquire the same recognition of empress as Töregene Khatun, but who nevertheless played a fundamental role in the development of the empire as a whole. Finally, we look at other cases of politically influential women who emerged in this period, but whose influence was restricted to specific areas of the Mongol domains. In particular, the regency of Orghina Khatun in Central Asia is a subject of study.

In Chapter 3, we move our focus to the role of women in the political arena of the Ilkhanate in Iran. The first part of the chapter aims to answer the question of why no woman ruled the Ilkhanate from its establishment in 1260 until it officially ended in 1335. We explore how women were politically active and influential throughout this period, but also how this

influence never materialised into the acquisition of the same nominal recognition as rulers that can be seen in the cases analysed in Chapter 2. In this context, the late and short rule of Sati Beg (r. 1339) is also taken into account in the context of a disintegrating Mongol state in Iran. The second part offers an alternative picture by focusing on the local subject dynasties of the Ilkhanate in the regions of Fars, Kerman and Anatolia. We look at how the women of these Turkic dynasties did acquire recognition as rulers of their territories in contradiction to their Mongol counterparts.

In order to understand the role that women may have played in government, it is necessary to explore how and to what extent they participated in the economy of the empire, whether or not they gained a degree of economic autonomy and whether or not they had any control over the empire's means of production. How would such economic power have been achieved? To what extent did women have the capacity to decide when and where to invest their wealth? The answer to these questions may lie, at least in part, in the phenomenon of traditional Mongolian property allocation. The degree of financial independence of these women may have its roots in the endowment of cattle, slaves and goods obtained as booty; there are references in the sources to prominent women inheriting these 'commodities' from their husbands and parents.[118] However, the use that these women made of such property has not so far been investigated in depth. Here, we look at how the *khātūns* accrued wealth from the taxation of the sedentary population in Iran, and from investments in commercial trading enterprises. Hence, the economy of the *khātūns* will be the main topic of Chapter 4.

Finally, this study would be unambitious if it did not tackle the role of the *khātūns* in the religious milieu of the Mongol Empire. Therefore, Chapter 5 looks at the attitudes of religious tolerance among Mongol men and women that were documented during the Mongol period. In addition, it is important to bear in mind that these women were individuals with their own religious preferences and dislikes. For this reason, it is particularly worthwhile exploring how women interacted with the variety of Eurasian religions, their participation in rituals, and their general attitudes towards the religious leaders of different confessions. This provides a more nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between the *khātūns* and religion, whilst at the same time reveals the underlying and gradual process by which the 'faith of the conquered' was adopted by the Mongols in different parts of the empire. The religious landscape of the Mongol territories was shaped, too, by the involvement of women in religious patronage, an important mode of influence closely related to their political and economic role in the empire.

Notes

1. G. R. Hambly, 'Becoming Visible: Medieval Islamic Women in Historiography and History', in G. R. Hambly (ed.), *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage, and Piety* (New York, 1998), p. 23.
2. On the fragmentation of the Mongol Empire, see P. Jackson, 'The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire', *Central Asiatic Journal* 22 (1978), pp. 186–244, and 'From *Ulus* to Khanate: The Making of the Mongol State, c. 1220–c. 1290', in R. Amitai and D. O. Morgan (eds), *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy* (Leiden, 1999), pp. 12–38.
3. On the term *khātūn,* see also J. A. Boyle, 'Khātun', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn, http://www.brillonline.nl/browse/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2 (hereafter, *EI2*); G. Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen: Unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung älterer Neupersischer Geschichtsquellen, vor Allem der Mongolen- und Timuridenzeit*, vol. III (Wiesbaden, 1967), pp. 132–41.
4. R. Frye, 'Women in Pre-Islamic Central Asia: The Khātun of Bukhara', in G. R. Hambly (ed.), *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage, and Piety* (New York, 1998), pp. 55–68; B. De Nicola, 'The Queen of the Chaghatayds: Orghīna Khātūn and the Rule of Central Asia', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26:1–2 (2016), pp. 107–20.
5. Hambly, 'Becoming Visible', p. 22.
6. C. Melville, 'Historiography iv. Mongol Period', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, eds E. Yarshater and A. Ashraf, http://www.iranicaonline.org/ (hereafter, *EIr*).
7. See, among others, B. Birge, *Women, Property, and Confucian Reaction in Sung and Yüan China (960–1368)* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 212–40; G. Q. Zhao, 'Control through Conciliation: Royal Marriages between the Mongol Yuan and Koryŏ (Korea) during the 13th and 14th Centuries', *Toronto Studies in Central Inner Asia* 6 (2004), pp. 3–26; G. Q. Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy and Cultural Expression: Mongolian Royal Marriages from World Empire to Yuan Dynasty* (New York, 2008); G. Zhao and R. W. Guisso, 'Female Anxiety and Female Power: The Political Involvement of Mongol Empresses during the 13th and 14th Centuries', *Toronto Studies in Central and Inner Asia* 7 (2005), pp. 17–46; J. W. Dardess, 'The Cheng Communal Family: Social Organization and Neo-Confucianism in Yuan and Early Ming China', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 34 (1974), pp. 7–52; H. Franke, 'Women under the Dynasty of Conquest', in L. Lanciotti (ed.), *La Donna Nella Cina Imperiale e Nella Cina Repubblicana* (Florence, 1980), pp. 23–43.
8. See, for example, N. Abbot, 'Women and the State in Early Islam', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 1:1 (January 1942), pp. 106–26.
9. R. Chartier, *Cultural History: Between Practice and Representation*, trans. L. G. Cochrane (Ithaca, 1988), p. 47.

10. P. Burke, *What is Cultural History?* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 74–88.
11. Examples of this are ‘history of high culture’, ‘cultural history of politics’, ‘cultural history of violence and emotions’, and ‘cultural encounters between cultures’. See Burke, *What is Cultural History?*, pp. 100–25.
12. Burke, *What is Cultural History?*, p. 125.
13. D. O. Morgan, ‘Mongol Historiography since 1985: The Rise of Cultural History’, in R. Amitai and M. Biran (eds), *Nomads as Agents of Cultural Change: The Mongols and Their Eurasian Predecessors* (Honolulu, 2015), pp. 271–82.
14. Burke, *What is Cultural History?*, pp. 128–9.
15. Note, for example, F. Mernissi, *Forgotten Queens of Islam* (Cambridge, 1993); B. F. Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation* (New York, 1994); and D. Cortese and S. Calderini, *Women and the Fatimids in the World of Islam* (Edinburgh, 2006), p. 3.
16. Cortese and Calderini, *Women and the Fatimids*, p. 1.
17. J. Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History* (Harlow, 2006), p. 100.
18. To mention a few, see Abbot, ‘Women and the State in Early Islam’, pp. 106–26; N. Abbot, *Aishah: The Beloved of Mohammed* (London, 1985); E. Fernea and B. Q. Bezirgan (eds), *Middle Eastern Muslim Women Speak* (Austin and London, 1977); N. R. Keddie (ed.), *Women in the Muslim World* (Cambridge, MA, 1978); M. Morsy, *Les femmes du Prophète* (Paris, 1989); M. Fahmi, *La condition de la femme dans l'islam* (Paris, 1990); L. Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven and London, 1992). More recently, R. Roded (ed.), *Women in Islam and the Middle East: A Reader* (London, 1999); G. Nashat and L. Beck (eds), *Women in Iran from the Rise of Islam to 1800* (Urbana, 2003); Y. Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (Cambridge, 2005); Cortese and Calderini, *Women and the Fatimids*.
19. D. M. Dunlop, ‘The Keraits of Eastern Asia’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 11:2 (1944), pp. 276–89.
20. He mentions Börte, Sorghaghtani Beki, Abiqah [Ibaqa] Khatun, another unnamed *khātūn*, Doquz Khatun, Örüg Khatun and the wife of the Kerait prince Irinjin (also the daughter of Tegüder) who rebelled against Abu Sa‘id Ilkhan in the fourteenth century. Only the first and the last one of these *khātūns* did not belong to the Kerait tribe.
21. P. Ratchnevsky, ‘La condition de la femme mongole au 12e/13e siècle’, in G. Doerfer *et al*. (eds), *Tractata Altaica: Denis Sinor sexagenario optime de rebus altaicis merito dedicate* (Wiesbaden, 1976), pp. 509–30; M. Rossabi, ‘Khubilai Khan and the Women in his Family’, in W. Bauer (ed.), *Studia Sino-Mongolica: Festschrift Fur Herbert Franke* (Wiesbaden, 1979), pp. 153–80.
22. Rossabi, ‘Khubilai Khan’, p. 153; Ratchnevsky, ‘Condition de la femme mongole’, p. 510.

23. See S. Bayani, *Zan dar Irān-i ᶜaṣr-i Mughūl* (Tehran, 1974).
24. This opinion is shared by Hambly, 'Becoming Visible', p. 7.
25. A. Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia: Aspects of Administrative, Economic and Social History* (New York, 1988), pp. 258–96.
26. See B. Üçok, *Femmes turques souverraines et regents dans les états islamiques*, trans. A. Çamali (n. d.).
27. The exception is found in Mernissi's references to some women in the Mongol Empire, mostly based on her secondary bibliography and the Arab chronicles. See Mernissi, *Forgotten Queens*.
28. See J. Holmgren, 'Observations on Marriage and Inheritances in Early Mongol Yüan Society, with Particular Reference to the Levirate', *Journal of Asian History* 20 (1986), pp. 127–92; 'Political Organisation of Non-Han States in China: The Role of Imperial Princes in Wei, Liao and Yuan', *Journal of Oriental Studies* 25 (1987), pp. 1–37; and 'Imperial Marriage in the Native Chinese and Non-Han State, Han to Ming', in R. Watson and P. Bucley Ebrey (eds), *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society* (Berkeley, 1991), pp. 58–96.
29. Birge, *Women, Property, and Confucian Reaction*; B. Birge, 'Women and Confucianism from Song to Ming: The Institutionalization of Patrilineality', in P. J. Smith and R. Von Glahn (eds), *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History* (Cambridge, MA, 2003), pp. 212–40.
30. Hambly, 'Becoming Visible', pp. 3–27.
31. For example, 'Apart from women and Sufis, the study of women as scholarly teachers and transmitters of knowledge has also been neglected' (Hambly, 'Becoming Visible', p. 8).
32. See J. D. Ryan, 'Christian Wives of Mongol Khans: Tartar Queens and Missionary Expectations in Asia', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 8:3 (1998), pp. 411–21.
33. C. Melville, *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Il-Khanate, 1327–1337: A Decade of Discord in Mongol Iran* (Bloomington, 1999).
34. Melville, *Fall of Amir Chupan*, pp. 14–16.
35. B. De Nicola, 'Mongol Khātuns and the Process of Sedentarization', master's dissertation (SOAS, University of London, 2006), and 'Las mujeres mongolas en los siglos XII y XIII: Un análisis sobre el rol de la madre y la esposa de Chinggis Khan', *Acta Histórica y Arqueológica Medievalia* 27–8 (Barcelona, 2006–7), pp. 37–64.
36. Zhao, 'Control through Conciliation', pp. 3–26.
37. Rossabi, 'Khubilai Khan', p. 172.
38. Zhao, 'Control through Conciliation', p. 20.
39. The official history of the Koryo dynasty.
40. See chapter 11 in G. Lane, *Daily Life in the Mongol Empire* (Westport and London, 2006), pp. 227–56.
41. Morgan, 'Mongol Historiography since 1985'.

42. Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy*.
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44. Y. Brack, 'A Mongol Princess Making Hajj: The Biography of El Qutlugh Daughter of Abagha Ilkhan (r. 1265–82)', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 21:3 (2011), pp. 331–59.
45. Brack, 'A Mongol Princess', p. 358.
46. H. Gilli-Elewy, 'On Women, Power, and Politics during the Last Phase of the Ilkhanate', *Arabica* 59 (2012), pp. 709–23.
47. A. F. Broadbridge, 'Marriage, Family and Politics: The Ilkhanid-Oirat Connection' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26:1–2 (2016), pp. 121–35.
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52. D. O. Morgan, *The Mongols* (Cambridge, MA, 1986; rev. edn 2007), p. 8.
53. The main edition used here is Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Jāmi*ᶜ *al-tawārīkh*, ed. M. Rawshan and M. Mūsavī, 4 vols (Tehran, 1373/1994), vol. II, p. 822 (hereafter, *JT*). For the translation, see Rashid al-Din Tabib, *The Successors of Genghis Khan,* trans. J. A. Boyle (New York and London, 1971), p. 199 (hereafter, *Successors*). However, occasionally I have used the partial edition in Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Geschichte Ġāzān-Ḫān's aus dem Ta'rīḫ-i-Mubārak-i-Ġāzānī des Rašīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh b. 'Imād al-Daula Abūl-Ḫair*, ed. K. Jahn (London, 1940). Further, Karimi's compilation of other edited versions of the chronicle has also been consulted; see Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Jāmi*ᶜ *al-tawārīkh*, ed. B. Karimi, 2 vols (Tehran, 1367/1988–9). There are also some translations: *Jami*ᶜ*u't-tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*, ed. S. S. Kuru and trans. W. M. Thackston, 3 vols (Boston, 1998) (hereafter, Thackston); *Successors*; *Histoire des Mongols de la Perse*, trans. É. Quatremère, 3 vols (Amsterdam, 1968) (hereafter, *JTQ*).

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97. See G. G. Guzman, 'Simon of Saint-Quentin and the Dominican Mission to the Mon-gol Baiju: A Reappraisal', *Speculum* 46 (1971), pp. 232–49; P. M. Holt, 'The Ilkhan Ahmad's Embassies to Qalawun: Two Contemporary Accounts', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 49:1 (1986), pp. 128–32; A. Mostaert and A. W. Cleaves, 'Les lettres de 1289 et 1305 des Ilkhan Argun et Oljeitu a Philippe le Bel', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 83:2 (April–June 1963), pp. 265–8; J. Pfeiffer, 'Aḥmad Tegüder's Second Letter to Qalāʾūn (682/1283)', in J. Pfeiffer and S. A. Quinn (eds), *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honour of John E. Woods* (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp. 167–202; Rei d'Aragò Jaume I, *Llibre dels Fet*, ed. J. Bruguera, 2 vols (Barcelona, 1991) (hereafter, *LDF*).
98. See Grigor of Akanc', 'History of the Nation of Archers', ed. and trans. P. Blake and R. Frye, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 12:3/4 (December 1949), p. 343; on the picture of Doquz Khatun as a saint, see J. M. Fiey, 'Iconographie syriaque, Hulagu, Doquz Khatun ... et six ambons?', *Le Museon* 87 (1975), pp. 59–68.
99. See, for example, *Histoire de la Géorgie: depuis l'Antiquité jusqu'au XIXe siècle*, trans. M. Brosset (St Petersburg, 1849); Anonymous, *The Chronicle of Novgorod 1016–1471*, ed./trans. R. Michell and N. Forbes (London, 1914).
100. See a translation from Armenian in Frère Hayton, *The Flower of Histories of the East*, trans. R. Bedrosian, http://rbedrosian.com/hetumint.htm (accessed February 2011). This book was very popular in Western Europe until the late sixteenth century with numerous translations in Romance languages. See the Old English version in Frère Hayton, *A Lytell Cronycle: Richard Pynson's Translation (c. 1520) of 'La Fleur des histoires de la terre d'Orient' (c. 1307)*, ed. G. Burger and trans. R. Pynson (Toronto, 1988); a French edition

in *La Fleur des histoires de la terre d'Orient: divisées en cinq parties* (Lyon, 1585); and a Spanish version in *Historia de cosas del Oriente, primera y segunda parte: contiene una descripción general de los Reynos de Assia con las cosas mas notables dellos, etc*., trans. A. Centeno (Cordoba, 1595).

101. See, for example, Kirakos of Gandzaketsᶜi, *Kirakos Gandzakets'iˀs History of the Armenians*, trans. R. Bedrosian (New York, 1986); Constable Smpad, 'The Armenian Chronicle of the Constable Smpad or of The "Royal Historian"', ed. and trans. S. D. Nersessian, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 13 (1959), pp. 141–68; Vardan Arewelc'i, 'The Historical Compilation of Vardan Arewelc'i', trans. R. W. Thomson, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 43 (1989), pp. 125–226 (hereafter, VA); S. Orbelian, *Histoire de la Siounie*, trans. M. Brosset (St Petersburg, 1864) (hereafter, *HS*); and translated extracts from these texts in E. Dulaurier, 'Les Mongols d'après les historiens armeniens: fragments traduits sur les textes originaux', *Journal Asiatique* 5 série, XI (1858), pp. 192–255, 426–73, 481–508 (reprint edition by S. Qaukhchishvili, trans. K. Vivian, Amsterdam, 2001).

102. On him and his work, see D. Aigle, 'L'oeuvre historiographique de Barhebraeus: son apport à l'histoire de la période mongole', *Parole de l'Orient* 33 (2008), pp. 25–61; G. Lane, 'An Account of Gregory Bar Hebraeus Abu Al-Faraj and his Relations with the Mongols of Persia', *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 2:2 (July 1999), available at: http://syrcom.cua.edu/Hugoye/Vol2No2/HV2N2GLane.html.

103. G. Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance* (London and New York, 2003), p. 11; D. Aigle, 'Bar Hebraeus et son public à travers ses chroniques en Syriaque et en Arabe', *Le Muséon* 18:1/2 (2005), pp. 87–101.

104. The term 'religiosity' in this book is used to refer to features pertaining, appropriate or related to the various aspects that constitute the religious lifestyles and creeds of the Mongol women here studied, including participation in religious rituals, financing or supporting of religious institutions, their adoption of a religion other than their own and the visiting and/or seeking advice from religious authorities and scholars.

105. See Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abû'l-Faraj 1225–1286, the Son of Aaron, the Hebrew Physician Commonly Known as Bar Hebraeus, Being the First Part of his Political History of the World*, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge, 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1976; reprint, New Jersey, 2003) (hereafter, *Chronography*). For his access to the Mongol library in the Maragha Observatory, see Aigle, 'L'oeuvre historiographique', pp. 30–1. On the observatory in general, see A. Sayili, *The Observatory in Islam and its Place in the General History of the Observatory* (Ankara, 1960), pp. 189–223; G. Saliba, 'Solar Observations at the Maraghah Observatory before 1275: A New Set of Parameters', in G. Saliba (ed.), *A History of Arabic Astronomy: Planetary Theories During the Golden Age of Islam* (New York, 1994), pp. 177–86.

106. A detailed comparison between the Arabic and Syriac versions of Bar Hebraeus's work is given in Aigle, 'L'oeuvre historiographique', pp. 32–8.
107. See E. A. Wallis Budge (trans.), *The Monks of Kublai Khan, Emperor of China* (London, 1928); also M. Rossabi, *Voyager from Xanadu* (New York, 1992); P. G. Borbone (ed./trans.), *Storia di Mar Yahballaha e di Rabban Sauma: Cronaca siriaca del XIV secolo* (Moncalieri, 2009).
108. Especially by Reuven Amitai, but also in P. Jackson, 'The Mongol Empire, 1986–1999', *Journal of Medieval History* 26:2 (2000), p. 210, among many others. See also E. Ashtor, 'Some Unpublished Sources for the Baḥri Period', *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 9 (1961), pp. 11–30. For a description of Mamluk historiography, see D. P. Little, *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography: An Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of Al-Malik an-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalā'ūn*, vol. II (Wiesbaden, 1970).
109. See, for example, Baybars al-Mansuri, *Zubdat al-fikrah fī taʾrīkh al-hijrah*, ed. D. S. Richards (Beirut, 1998); Ahmad ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhab al-Nuwayri. *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. M. M. Qumayhah and I. Shams al-Din (Beirut, 2004–5); S. F. Sadeque, *Baybars I of Egypt* (Dhaka, 1956). Similarly, the work produced by the Damascus-born al-ᶜUmari is another example of this literature; see Ibn Fadl Allah al-ᶜUmari, *Das Mongolische Weltreich: al-'Umari's Darstellung der Mongolischen Reiche in Seinem Werk 'Masālik al-Abṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār'*, trans. K. von Lech (Wiesbaden, 1968) (hereafter, UM).
110. See Abuʾl-Fidaʾ, *The Memoirs of a Syrian Prince: Abuʾl-Fidāʾ, Sultan of Hamah (672–732/1273–1331,* trans. P. M. Holt (Wiesbaden, 1983); F. Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, trans. E. J. Costello (London, 1957); ᶜIzz al-Din ibn al-Athir, *The Annals of the Saljuq Turks: Selections from 'al-Kāmil fīʾl-Taʾrīkh' of ᶜIzz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr*, trans. D. S. Richards (London, 2002), and *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the Crusading Period from 'al-Kāmil fīʾl-Taʾrīkh'*, trans. D. S. Richards, 3 vols (Aldershot, 2006–8); Ahmad ibn ᶜAli al-Maqrizi, *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt*, ed. and trans. R. J. C. Broadhurst (Boston, 1980) (hereafter, MK); Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades* (London, 1932).
111. For a full description of these sources, see R. Amitai, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk–Īlkhānid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 4–7. See also, C. Melville, 'The Contribution of Arabic Sources to the History of Medieval Iran', in M. Anastassiadou (ed.), *Sociétés et cultures musulmanes d'hier et d'aujourd'hui: actes de la IXe réunion des chercheurs sur le monde arabe et musulman* (Paris, 1996), pp. 313–17.
112. See D. Aigle, 'The Mongol Invasions of Bilād al-Shām by Ghazan Khān and Ibn Taymīyah's Three "Anti-Mongol" Fatwas', *Mamluk Studies Review* 11:2 (2007), p. 100.
113. See especially, ᶜAbd al-Razzaq ibn Ahmad ibn al-Fuwati, *al-Ḥawādith al-jāmiᶜah*, ed. M. Jawad (Baghdad, 1932), and *Majmaᶜ al-ādāb fī*

mu^c jam al-alqāb, ed. M. al-Kazim, 6 vols (Tehran, 1416/1995) (hereafter, IFM).

114. See Muhammad ibn ^cAbd al-Rahim ibn al-Furat, *Ayyubids, Mamlukes and Crusaders: Selections from the 'Tārīkh al-Duwal wa^ɔl-Mulūk' of Ibn al-Furāt*, trans. U. and M. C. Lyons, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1971) (hereafter, *TDM*).
115. See Musa ibn Muhammad al-Yunini, *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: al-Yūnīnī's 'Dhayl Mir^ɔāt al-Zamān'*, ed. and trans. L. Guo, 2 vols (Leiden, 1998).
116. See D. Behrens-Abouseif, 'The *Maḥmal* Legend and the Pilgrimage of the Ladies of the Mamluk Court', *Mamluk Studies Review* 1 (1997), pp. 87–96; Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce*; Y. Rapoport, 'Women and Gender in Mamluk Society: An Overview', *Mamluk Studies Review* 11:2 (November 2007), pp. 1–45.
117. See Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, *A.D. 1325–1354*, trans./ed. C. Defrémery and B. R. Sanguinetti (French) and H. A. R. Gibb (English), vol. II (Cambridge, 1962), and *Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325–1354*, ed. and trans. H. A. R. Gibb (London, 2005).
118. *JT*, II, p. 822/*Successors*, p. 199.

1

Women and Politics from the Steppes to World Empire

> The king's underlings must not be allowed to assume power, for this causes the utmost harm and destroys the king's splendour and majesty. This particularly applies to women, for they are wearers of the veil and have not complete intelligence. … But when the king's wives begin to assume the part of rulers, they base their orders on what interested parties tell them, because they are not able to see things with their own eye in the way men constantly look at the affairs of the outside world.
>
> Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyāsat'nāmah*[1]

These words are attributed to the vizier of the Saljuq dynasty in Iran, Nizam al-Mulk (d. 485/1092), who painted this portrait of female rule in his work, the *Siyasatnamah* or *Siyar al-muluk*, almost 250 years before the arrival of the Mongols. Apart from any personal convictions about the matter, Nizam al-Mulk had political reasons for justifying the exclusion of women from politics: the influential role played by Terken Khatun, consort of Sultan Malik Shah (d. 1092), in the court of the Great Saljuqs was a challenge to his hegemony over state affairs.[2] However, the Mongols' perception of women's political involvement appears to have been very different when we consider the accounts contained in *The Secret History of the Mongols*. For example, the survival of Chinggis Khan and his subsequent political success was, according to this source, determined by the actions of the women in his family.[3] Consequently, rather opposing views on the role of women in politics are presented here: the more restricted approach expressed by the Persian vizier and the more receptive one contained in the Mongol sources. In turn, when the Mongols expanded throughout Eurasia and conquered Khurasan in the first half of the thirteenth century, these two contrasting conceptions of women's involvement in politics came up against each other. It is in this context that this chapter explores the evolution of female rule in Eurasia before the establishment of the Mongol Empire. The first section examines women's participation in political affairs before the appearance of Chinggis Khan in the political arena

of the Mongolian steppes. Based mostly on *The Secret History of the Mongols*, we explore the way in which pre-imperial nomads explained their mythological origin and early history. Owing to the limited amount of sources and the elusive nature of their contents, we only highlight some examples of the political involvement of women in this period that may have served as the basis for the future development of an institutionalised role for women in politics, which is discussed in Chapter 2. Similarly, in the second section, we look at the role of women during the early years of Chinggis Khan's life in the steppes. We look at what biographical information we possess about his mother, wife and other Mongol women of the period that have permeated the sources. Finally, the last section in this chapter explores whether there was, among the territories eventually conquered by the Mongols, any kind of female political involvement that might help to explain how women became rulers of the empire just one generation after Chinggis Khan. More specifically, we explore cases of women's regency in Central Asia, Iran and the Middle East before the arrival of the Mongols, to see if there are any precedents that those influential Mongol women might have relied upon to legitimise their accession to the throne in the 1240s.

Between Myth and History: Women in Pre-Chinggisid Mongolia

Before starting our study on the role of women in different aspects of imperial Mongol society, it is worth looking briefly at a number of women who lived in pre-imperial times. The cases presented in this section serve as a starting point for our analysis, where we can establish certain characteristics of women's interaction with society before the rise of Chinggis Khan. However, this task presents us with some difficulties regarding the available source material for this period that cannot be overlooked. In studying the early stages of the Mongol Empire, only two main Mongol sources have come to us.[4] Fortunately, once we begin to look through them, we notice that they are full of references to women. Obviously, these references differ in extent but include specific information on Mongol ladies, and on women in general. This situation leads to a simple conclusion: if this source is a 'genuine (not to be confused with reliable) native account of the life and deeds of Chinggis Qan',[5] then it might be argued that women played a crucial role in the development of the empire. On the other hand, if we consider a scenario in which the events narrated have been altered, then it is still proof of the high position of women within the traditional Mongol view of their past. Personally, I consider that, despite the bias, fabrications and exaggerations contained in every

historical source, both points of view should be kept in mind when studying Mongol women in medieval times.

It is generally accepted among scholars that traditional Mongol women were involved in domestic, religious, economic and military activities. But, this in itself does not explain the high status that nomadic societies accorded their women in medieval times. In order to understand this, it is necessary to take a look at the traditional conception of female status in the time of the founder of the empire, Chinggis Khan, and the crucial influence of the women around him. Looking at the mythological origin of the Mongol tribe serves as a good starting point to explore women's status in this nomadic society.[6]

It is told in *The Secret History of the Mongols* how the first Mongol (Batachiqan) was born of a blue-grey wolf and a fallow doe.[7] Eleven generations after this first human ancestor, a descendant of his called Dobun Mergen married a woman named Alan Qo'a (see Plate 1) and they had two sons, Bügünütei and Belgünütei.[8] Dobun Mergen died soon afterwards leaving Alan Qo'a 'without brothers-in-law and male relatives, and without husband'. Yet, after the death of her husband, she conceived three more sons from 'a resplendent yellow man' who 'entered by the light of the smoke-hole or the door top of the tent'.[9] This supernatural being, as Thomas T. Allsen has described it,[10] rubbed the woman's belly every night and penetrated her womb with light.[11] The youngest of the three sons (Bodonchar) born from Alan Qo'a and the 'man of light' was the founder of the Borjigin lineage, from which Chinggis Khan was later born (see Figure 1.1). Despite the combination of legend and myth contained in this story, it is relevant to highlight the fact that in the Mongol conception of their own ancestry, the mythical past and the historical presence of the Chinggisids were linked by a woman, and it is described in the source that this was the 'Mongols' own "official" accounting'.[12]

The relevance of women in the legendary past of the Mongols was not restricted to a single character. It is remarkable that *The Secret History of the Mongols* mentions the names of different women related to Chinggis Khan's ancestors. For example, the grandmother of Alan Qo'a (Barqujin Qo'a) and both her mother-in-law (Boroqchin Qo'a) and grandmother-in-law (Mongqoljin Qo'a) are mentioned at the beginning of the story.[13] No information other than their names is provided, yet it seems to be enough to establish the genealogical link between the direct descendants of Batachiqan and Alan Qo'a's family. At this point, perhaps Allsen's argument concerning the female linkage between the myth and history of the Mongols can be taken forwards, since apart from Alan Qo'a's active role in starting the lineage of Chinggis Khan, the names of those women

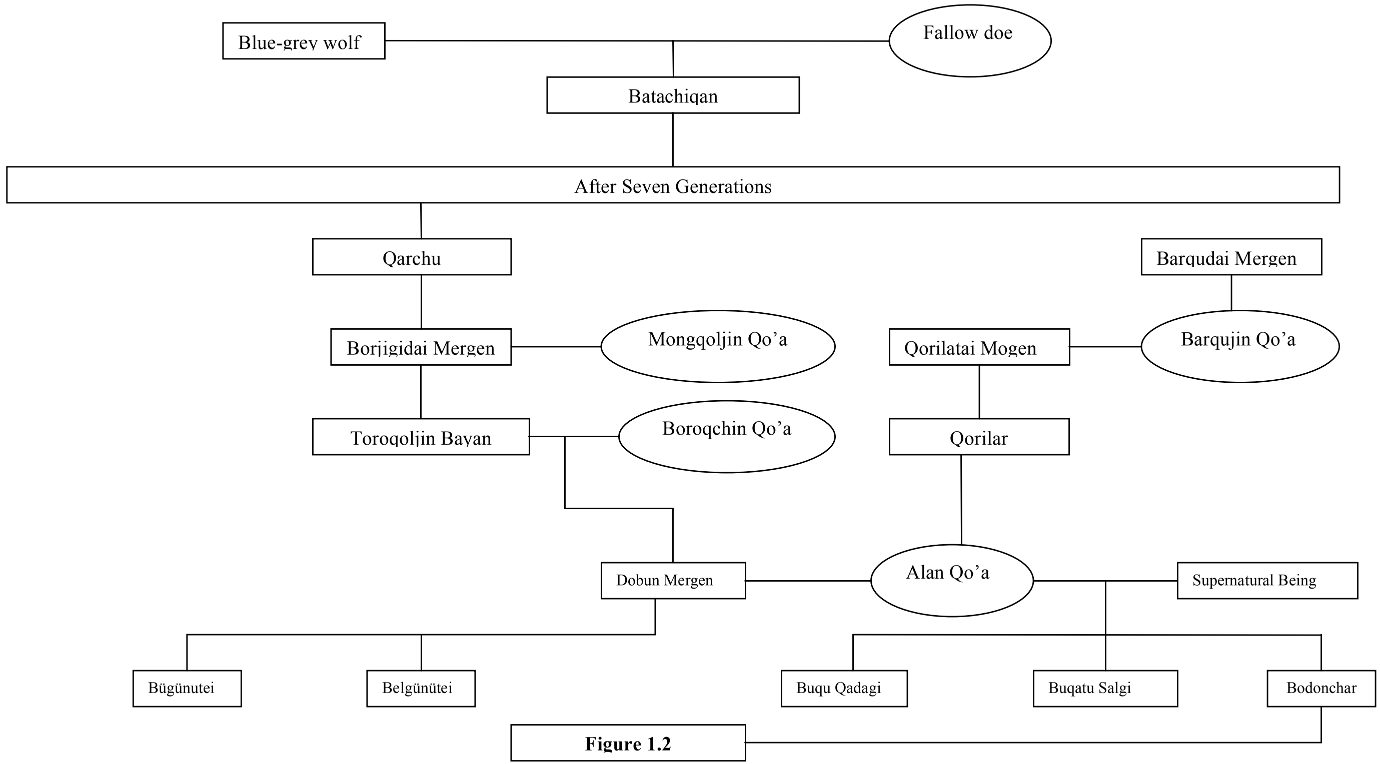


Figure 1.1 The ancestors of Chinggis Khan (part 1)

immediately connected to her were also considered significant enough to be mentioned, in the Secret History of the Mongols, to emphasise the genealogical connection of Alan Qo'a.

The emphasis on women's role in the construction of a mythical past is not exclusively a Mongol phenomenon.[14] Other Turkic tribes, such as the Qipchaqs, share these characteristics in their account of the past. According to Rashid al-Din,[15] Oghuz found a woman after a battle woman who was pregnant with the first member of the Qipchaqs. When the child was born, Oghuz adopted him, incorporating from then on, this particular tribe to the 'family' of Turco-Mongol people.[16] In fact, Oghuz's early life was also marked by his interaction with the female side of his family. In his story, women are depicted as fundamental in establishing his position within the family. According to some sources, he is the only one in the tribe who believes in God and he is forced to hide this from the others.[17] When he was only a baby, he rejected her mother's milk until she embraced his belief in a single God, and later rejected his two first wives only to accept a third one because she converted to his faith. The other two denounce his beliefs to his father, who orders that Oghuz be killed. It is his third wife who alerts him by sending a loyal woman from her camp to warn him. Father and son fight and the latter emerges victorious in a story where women play a pivotal part in the construction of the narrative.

After this filial rebellion, the story concludes with Oghuz taking control of the realm in Central Asia and some of the relatives who had supported him going eastwards, becoming the ancestors of the Mongols.[18] This foundation myth of the Turks as well as the Mongols has a strong component of female involvement. As we will see later on in the case of Chinggis Khan, the mother and the chief wife play crucial roles in the early development of nomadic heroes. In the case above, the first two people in the tribe to 'believe in God' after Oghuz are his mother and favourite wife. Later on, the confrontation between father and son is generated by women, who betray him by telling his father about his beliefs.[19] Finally, his favourite wife sends another woman to alert him of his father's intentions. This last action is frequently re-enacted in traditional Mongol society, with women advising rulers and protecting them from the treachery of other members of the family.[20]

Continuing with *The Secret History*, after the death of Alan Qo'a, a description of the lineage of her youngest son Bodonchar (the ancestor of Chinggis Khan) is given. His story covers paragraphs §24 to §43, in which a succession of genealogical connections are mentioned. Unfortunately, we do not have the names of those women who had a relationship with Bodonchar, but we are told that he took one from a defeated clan and then received a concubine as a dowry (a housemaid of the mother of another

tribal chief),[21] both practices being common among the Mongols.[22] The incorporation of women by marriage into a Mongol clan was fundamental in establishing the status of the sons and daughters of the nomadic tribal chiefs.[23] It seems that it was not the way in which women entered the clan but the status (either as chief wife, secondary wife or concubine) which determined the influence of their descendants.[24] For that reason, the sons of the kidnapped women – both those born of Bodonchar and those born before by another man – founded their own tribes, which were fundamental in the development of the Mongol Empire.[25] For example, the fate of two different family lines is marked by this distinction. On the one hand, the relatives of Jamuqa, first an ally and then an enemy of Chinggis Khan, were among the descendants of this 'foreign' boy.[26] On the other hand, a child born of a concubine, despite being a son of Bodonchar, were not even allowed to participate in performing sacrifices with the family.[27]

The genealogical connections of Bodonchar's descendants described by *The Secret History* lead us to the first Mongol woman who appears as a historical figure (Numulun).[28] Her influence in Mongol society will be considered in the following section of this chapter to illustrate patterns of continuity and transformation between the pre-imperial and imperial female role. The case of Numulun is important because, chronologically, it is the first reference that we have in which all the different aspects of a *khātūn*'s autonomy can be observed in a single person. She is portrayed as being in charge of the entire economic activity of her *ordo* (Mongol camp) and ordering the fundamental activity of feeding the herds of her subordinates.[29]

In addition, three more women can be identified in the *Jami^{c} al-tawarikh*, before Rashid al-Din begins the story of Chinggis Khan's mother. However, no reference to them is given either in *The Secret History* or in the *Altan Tobchi*, suggesting that their story might have reached the Persian vizier either through oral transmission from his Mongol patrons or via sources that have not come down to us. The first woman is Töra Qalmish, a daughter of the tribal chief Sariq Khan. She was given in marriage to Qur[r]jaghush Buyuruq Khan, in exchange for her father affording him protection, following the traditional nomadic practice of marriage alliance.[30] We do not know much about her, but there is a reference to her involvement in shamanic rituals – or 'magic', as Rashid al-Din prefers to describe it – that allows us to consider religion as another aspect of Mongol life in which women were involved. In fact, there are references indicating that women acted as shamans in traditional Mongol society,[31] but the available sources refer to female intervention in religion from a more political point of view, as was the case with Börte's

confrontation with the supreme shaman Teb Tenggri explained below, or else depict the shamanic rituals as sorcery.

According to Rashid al-Din, these 'magical' practices were responsible for the constant discomfort of Töra's husband Buyuruq Khan:

> His wife, Törä Qaimish, used to practise magic, and every time he [Buyuruq Khan] went hunting, she would immediately bring him down. Since he was suffering at her hands, he ordered two concubines of his to kill her, and so they did. After that he was worried about his sons and wanted to conceal from them what he had done. Seizing upon some pretext, he killed the two concubines.[32]

It is interesting to note that Buyuruq Khan did not kill Töra himself, but sent two of his concubines to perform the act. The two assassins also had to be killed in order to avoid animosity and distrust from other members of the family, maintaining in this way the alliances generated by the marriage. The story also indicates that the murder ordered by Buyuruq Khan was something extraordinary, since he found himself in the situation of sending other women to kill Töra and then killing them to cover up his act. Though a patriarchal society, the high status of women prevented a husband from getting rid of his wife if he was not satisfied with her, which functioned as a sort of protection system for women in the face of masculine violence – the above example notwithstanding.

The second woman mentioned by Rashid al-Din in this pre-Chinggisid period is Qo'a Qulqu, the wife of Qabul Khan and mother of his six sons.[33] We know that she was the older sister of Sayin Tegin, for whom she requests the assistance of a Tatar shaman when her brother became ill. Unfortunately, Sayin died after the treatment. The shaman is sent back home, but later on the 'eldest and youngest brothers' of Sayin go to the Tatar camp and kill the shaman. Enmity ensues between the Mongols and the Tatars, and, because Qabul Khan is 'married to a sister of Sayin Tekin, Qabul Khan had to assist her brothers in battle'. This is the origin of the rivalry between the Mongols and Tatars that marks the early life of Chinggis Khan, since that tribe is held responsible for the killing of Chinggis's father and handing over Ambaqai (an ancestor of Chinggis Khan) to the Chinese emperor.[34] The relevance of this event for our purpose resides in the fact that, on the one hand, it is another reference to the role of shamans in traditional Mongol society and, on the other, it is a story constructed from the point of view of Qo'a Qulqu. In other words, Rashid al-Din does not refer to Sayin as 'Qabul Khan's brother-in-law', but instead the woman is portrayed as the genealogical link between the men. If we bear in mind that Rashid al-Din based his history on Mongol

sources (either oral or written),[35] it is feasible to suggest that, once Qo'a Qulqu entered the family of Qabul Khan, she became an influential character in her own right within the Mongol narrative of the past. If this assumption is correct, this episode offers further evidence of the high status that Mongol *khātūns* held in 'traditional' Mongol society as reflected in the transmission of Mongol ancestry.

Finally, a daughter-in-law of the same Qabul Khan also caught the attention of the Persian historian. Her name appears as Matai Khatun and, interestingly enough, no reference is made to her husband. The story is situated in a context of enmity between Qabul Khan and the Chinese emperor. After being captured by a Chinese envoy, Qabul manages to escape, make his way back to Mongolia and organise his defence, relying solely on the support of his daughter-in-law (Matai).[36] The story is a good illustration of female intervention in military affairs. There is no specific reference to Matai's participation in the battle, but Qabul asks for her help in attacking the Chinese envoy. Those whom Qabul Khan asks for military assistance include Matai's subjects (slaves, servants and relatives) but her own participation in the struggle cannot be ruled out.[37] There are also other references to female participation in military action, including the most probable legendary accounts of a daughter of Chinggis Khan participating in the conquest of the Persian city of Nushapur and Qutulun, daughter of the Ögeteid Qaidu (d. 1303), who allegedly defeated every man brave enough to fight againt her.[38]

So, this short survey of *The Secret History of the Mongols*, the *Altan Tobchi* and the *Jami*ᶜ *al-tawarikh* shows that women's involvement in Mongol society already had a precedent in pre-imperial times. Despite the relatively scant information available, it is possible to identify a variety of roles that Mongol women played in pre-Chinggisid Mongolia. These women not only are described as participating in politics, religion, the economy and warfare, but also some of them are mentioned by name, indicating their importance in the Mongol conception of their past. Perhaps the most significant example of this argument is to be found in the role of the legendary Alan Qo'a, who, as we have seen, is the only human link between the Turkic-nomadic tribes and all the Mongol clans. All these women paved the way for the involvement of women in society once the Mongols had expanded throughout Eurasia. Their role was not fixed, for it seems always to have adapted to new personal, historical and geographical circumstances. Mongol women were politically, economically and commercially active, with a singular religious worldview which they brought with them from the steppes into the Mongol domains of a new world.

Women and Political Affairs in Pre-imperial Times

> Of the hundred women that I possess there is not one I really like. One has understanding, but I do not command her hands and feet. Another whose hands and feet are nice, I do not command her understanding, and there is no beauty who is servile, skilled, and possessed of understanding.[39]

The above sentences are attributed to the pre-Chinggisid nomadic chief Sariq Khan in Rashid al-Din's *Jami^{c} al-tawarikh*. They seem to portray a scenario in which women are active and independent to the extent that Sariq Khan seems unable to find one who personifies the ideal of women being 'servile, skilled, and possessed of understanding'. However, Persian sources are sometimes contradictory when it comes to events involving women in pre-imperial Mongolia. This is especially true of Rashid al-Din, who mixes eulogies to the independence and courage of Mongol women with a supposed search for female docility among Mongol men.[40] This contradiction should be seen, I believe, as the consequence of both a conflict of interest between the Persian historian and his Mongol patron Ghazan Khan and the more general process of the acculturation of the Mongol elites into Islamo-Persian culture occurring in Iran during the second half of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth century.[41] In fact, only a few paragraphs before the above quotation, Sariq Khan, after defeating the Tatar tribe in battle, is addressed by a woman (Tabaray Qayan)[42] from the defeated tribe in the following terms: 'We [the Tatars] had conquered high and low. If all grow few, why should we not grow few, and if all fall to pieces, why should we not fall to pieces?'. In other words, she is suggesting that anyone can suffer a change of fortune.[43] According to Rashid al-Din, Sariq Khan replied, '"This [defeated] woman speaks truth" and for that reason he [Sariq] came under the protection of another Khan'.[44] Consequently, within the space of only a few paragraphs, we can find two very different male attitudes towards women coming from the same man. The first is a somewhat 'macho' complaint against women as a gender, whilst the second is an implicit recognition of the wisdom of a particular woman hailing from a different, defeated tribe. Two distinct ideas about the political involvement of women are represented, illustrating the difficulties that sources present in dealing with the role of women in the political affairs of the Mongols.

In pre-imperial Mongolia – that is, before the coronation of Temüjin as Chinggis Khan in 1206 – both his mother Hö'elün and his first wife Börte are described as crucial in securing Temüjin's political supremacy in the steppes during the late twelfth century. However, the first reference to a Mongol woman in the sources who is not only mentioned by name,

but has various aspects of her life described, is a certain Numulun. She is presented as the mother of Qaidu, the sixth forebear of Chinggis Khan and the first Mongol chief who apparently unified the different Mongol tribes.[45] Despite confusion about the name of her husband,[46] all the sources agree on her name and on the fact that she was the mother of Qaidu. Her story is described with special interest by Rashid al-Din. When her husband died, her eight sons (seven according to *The Secret History*) married and went away as 'sons-in-law' with their brides' families, leaving her behind.[47] But they did not leave their mother alone; although we have no reference to indicate that Numulun (or Monolun) remarried, we know that she remained in charge of the family possessions and pasturelands. In fact, it was not strange for a woman to remain single after the death of her husband.[48]

Numulun played an important role in negotiating the unstable political balance of the steppes. Rashid al-Din mentions that a group of Jalayir Mongols escaped destruction after a campaign against them carried out by the Chinese emperor:[49]

> Seventy householders[50] of them [the Jalayirs] fled with their women and children and came to the territory of Monolun [Numulun], Dutum Mänen's wife. Since they were suffering from hunger, they pulled from the ground and ate the root of a plant called *südüsün*, which is eaten in that region. By that act the place where Monolun's sons raced their horses became pitted and rough. Monolun asked, 'Why do you create such roughness?' They therefore seized Monolun and killed her.[51]

This denotes Numulun's role as the highest political referee of the group, which was not only concerned with the administration of wealth, but also demanded her intervention vis-à-vis hostile tribes. As it happens, she failed to neutralise the aggression and was killed as a result. The unexpected arrival of the Jalayirs might have been the reason why we find no specific mention of any military resistance on the part of Numulun. Rashid al-Din's narrative becomes somewhat confusing when dealing with the fate of this Jalayir group and the revenge exacted by Numulun's sons.[52] Whatever happened, only one of Numulun's sons (Qaidu) remained alive after the struggle, whilst the men of the seventy Jalayir households were killed and their women and children given to Qaidu as slaves: 'From that date until now that clan have been hereditary slaves and were inherited by Genghis Khan and his offspring'.[53] Numulun's assassination remained in the consciousness of the Mongols at least until the early life of Chinggis Khan, when it was said that,

> [Nägüchär][54] and a few horsemen went to a place called Ölägäi Bulaq in the vicinity of Sa'ari Kähär, Genghis Khan's *yurt*, to steal animals from the house

> of Jochi Tarmala of the Jalayir tribe because some of them had killed Dutun Mänen's wife Monolun [Numulun] and her sons and taken Genghis Khan's ancestors prisoner.[55]

Therefore, Numulun not only played a role while she was alive in the political scenario of the steppes, but also remained as a social stigma in the Chinggiskhanid consciousness, serving to justify aggression towards other Mongol peoples during Chinggis Khan's unification of the Mongols.

In addition, other women who were contemporaries of Temüjin illustrate the widespread phenomenon of female involvement in political affairs. Of the groups that the future Chinggis Khan forced into submission during his unification of the Mongols, there are two that deserve special mention for different reasons. The first of them are the people generally referred to as the Kerait s, one of the tribes from which more women are mentioned in the sources, owing to their extensive intermarriage with the Chinggisid Mongols (see Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4).[56] The Keraits were the most powerful nomadic group in Mongolia during Temüjin's early life. They helped him to rescue his wife Börte after she was kidnapped by another Mongolian group (the Merkits), and later they campaigned together against common enemy groups such as the Tatars.[57] But the relationship between these two allies began to deteriorate when the leader of the Keraits (the Ong Khan) decided not to share the booty with his Chinggisid allies after they had destroyed the Merkits. In addition, the ruler of the Keraits rejected Temüjin's petition of marriage between Ong Khan's daughter (Cha'ur Beki) and his son Jochi,[58] an act which was a clear offense to Temüjin's pride. Yet, we are told that at first the future Chinggis Khan did not complain, but that after he had succeeded in defeating some of his rival tribes with Ong Khan's help, he broke from him, citing these two incidents as his main reasons for doing so.[59] Despite this initial alliance and the subsequent enmity between the followers of Chinggis Khan and the Keraits, women of the latter group became very important in the later development of the empire by marrying the sons and grandsons of Chinggis Khan. This might be the reason why so many Kerait women are mentioned in the source materials for the pre-imperial Mongol period. The names of at least six Kerait women are given for this period of Mongol history, without counting those who married Chinggis Khan's sons.[60] One of them (Alaq Yidun) was the wife of a Kerait commander who, after hostility between the Keraits and the Mongols had began, played the role of advisor and confidante in the same way that the sources portray Börte and Hö'elün in relation to Temüjin.[61]

The second group largely represented in the sources as having influ-

ential women in this pre-imperial period are the Naimans. One of its ladies, Gürbäsü Khatun, is mentioned as the one who stood up in front of her people and confronted the rising power of Temüjin in the steppes around the year 1203. There are contradictory accounts of her relationship with the nominal Naiman ruler Tayan Khan. According to Rashid al-Din, she was the favourite wife of Naiman Khan, who inherited her as a wife through the levirate system after his father had died, a common practice among the Mongols and Eurasian nomads in this period.[62] Whereas, *The Secret History* mentions that Gürbäsü Khatun was the mother of Tayan Khan.[63] Whatever the relationship between them, scholars agree that she was the de facto ruler of the Naiman people.[64] Her position among the Naimans underlines an interesting attitude towards female involvement in politics and its proximity to religious affairs.[65] She is depicted as a 'harsh' ruler compared with the 'soft' character of Tayan Khan, who had 'not thoughts or skills except for falconry and hunting'.[66] When the Naimans saw the Mongols coming to face them in 1203–4, Tayan Khan decided to retreat against the wishes of his son Küchlüg. One of Tayan's high officials, in the face of the Khan's cowardice, asked him

> how can you lose heart when it is still so early in the morning? Had we known that you would have lost courage in this manner, shouldn't we have brought your mother Gürbësü, even though she is a woman, and given her command of the army?[67]

It should be noted, however, that the use of the word 'woman' in this passage from *The Secret History* is ambiguous. Despite the fact that the above quotation expresses a wish that the Naiman woman 'Gürbësü' [Gürbäsü] were in charge of the army instead of its male chief, the reference may be no more than a contemptuous way of saying that even a woman would command the army in battle better than a cowardly khan. However, the fact that the general mentions Gürbäsü in particular and not simply 'a woman', as we find in other parts of *The Secret History*, leaves an open question as to what extent Gürbäsü herself was seen as a possible alternative ruler and military commander.[68] Eventually, Chinggis Khan defeated the Naimans and effectively incorporated them into his domain. But, in order to cement the integration of this tribe, he took Gürbäsü as his concubine, which indicates her importance among her husband's tribesmen. By these means, the Naimans were symbolically assimilated into the Mongol genealogy.[69]

The Secret History of the Mongols offers some magnificent stories that illustrate the role of women in inner-nomadic politics in the steppes during the life of Temüjin; some of these stories concern Hö'elün and Börte, respectively the mother and chief wife of the future Chinggis Khan. From

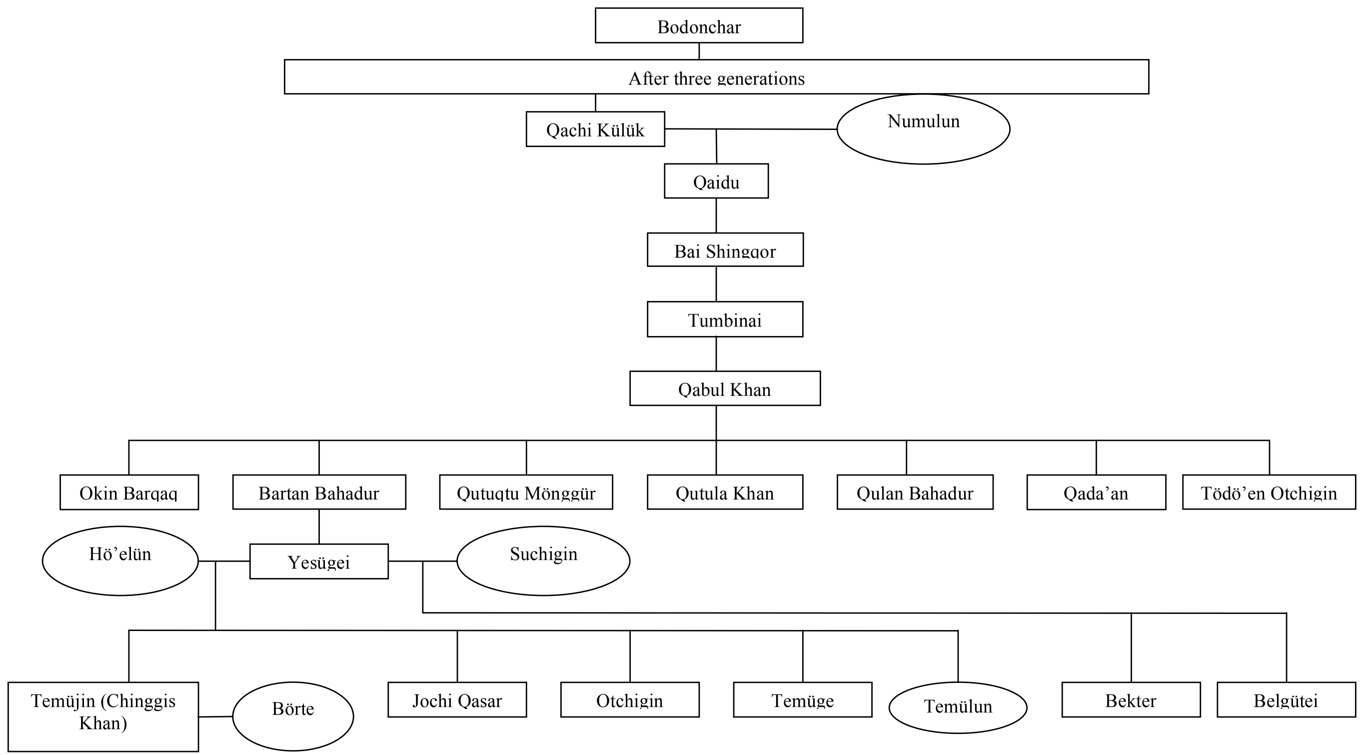


Figure 1. 2 The ancestors of Chinggis Khan (part 2)

this source we can also establish that there were three decisive events in the early life of the Mongol leader that shaped his career towards becoming the Great Khan, and in all of them the role of women appears to have been fundamental. The first was the abandonment of his family by the clan when his father died. *The Secret History* mentions that the origin of the split was a dispute between Hö'elün and the wives of Ambaqai Khan,[70] who had deprived Temüjin's mother of the right to partake in making offerings to the ancestors.[71] Through this action, the two wives showed that they did not recognise the right of succession of Hö'elün's children, and suggested to the rest of the tribe that it should abandon the wife and the children of Yesügei (Temüjin's father). The wives of Ambaqai were closely related to Temüjin's family and it seems that the performing of 'sacrifices' or, more specifically, 'food-burning sacrifices' in memory of the ancestors was a common practice in traditional Mongol society.

In these rituals, male and female members of the two groups would join together to offer meat, kumis (fermented mare's milk) and other alcoholic drinks to the common ancestor, while a shaman (or shamaness) carried out the ceremony.[72] What lay behind the exclusion of Hö'elün from the ceremony on the pretext of her being late was the political intention of excluding Yesügei's clan from the Mongol tribe after his death and reinforcing the influence of the Tayichi'ut branch of the group among the Mongols.[73] What is interesting is that this internal but crucial incident among the different Mongol subgroups is characterised in *The Secret History* as a conflict involving and solved exclusively by women, in which the wives of Ambaqai (Örbei and Soqatai) confront the widow of Yesügei (Hö'elün). The story continues by mentioning that Hö'elün did not simply accept her displacement from the rituals and the subsequent abandonment by the Tayichi'ut. On the contrary, when she found out about the departure of Ambaqai's descendants, she 'held the standard and, riding off all on her own, brought back half the people'.[74] Unfortunately for Hö'elün and her children, the people she brought back did not stay long and soon abandoned them. On the one hand, this episode marks the beginning of the most difficult years in the life of the young Temüjin, whilst on the other it sheds light on the active role that women played in the not uncommon succession struggles which were faced by the Mongols from pre-imperial times into the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[75]

If we move forward in time, another example of female political intervention can be found in the conflict between Temüjin and his *anda* (brother by blood oath) Jamuqa.[76] This episode took place after the young Temüjin had survived in the steppes (thanks to his mother) and after he had rescued Börte from the Merkits.[77] It happened during a period when

Temüjin had acquired some wealth and had become one of the promising 'tribal' leaders of Mongolia under the protection of the Kerait Ong Khan. Being allies for a while, Jamuqa suggested they camp near the mountains, but he made the suggestion in such a poetic and ambiguous style that Temüjin could not understand it.[78] Temüjin did what many other nomadic leaders did before and after him: he looked to his mother for advice. He asked Hö'elün about the meaning of his *anda*'s words, but the sudden, abrupt answer came not from his mother but from his wife, Börte. She warned him to take advantage of the night and keep going with their clan, leaving Jamuqa and his relatives behind in the camp.[79] This passage can be interpreted in a number of ways. First, that in Temüjin's family the women had changed positions in the hierarchy. Börte literally interrupted Hö'elün when she was advising her son. This might mean that, from this moment on, Börte had the female role of protector and judge in the family, a role that had hitherto been carried out by Hö'elün. Second, the split of the *andas* and the political implications of the division allowed different interpretations to be made by scholars regarding the responsibility for the disintegration of the alliance.[80] No matter who was responsible for the breakdown, Temüjin decided to follow his wife's advice and enmity ensued between the two allies. It is clear that, once again, there was female intervention (Börte in this case) in a succession struggle that was about to take place between the *andas*, and at stake was the Mongol leadership.

A third and final event can also be illustrative of the role of women in Temüjin's early life. This time the conflict was not between rival political leaders or family members, but can be seen as a struggle between the religious and imperial powers. Once Temüjin had gained control over most of the Mongol tribes, Teb-Tengri, a supreme shaman of the Mongols, jeopardised the stability of the royal family by creating disputes between Temüjin and his brothers. First, the shaman revealed 'signs of heaven' in which Qasar (Temüjin's brother) appeared as the ruler of the nation together with Temüjin, elevating the former to claimant of the throne. Second, the great shaman unilaterally took under his authority people belonging to the clan of Temüge (Temüjin's youngest brother). By this act, he overstepped the inheritance rights of Temüjin's brother and undermined his authority in the court. When Temüge complained, the shaman and his family humiliated him by making him kneel behind Teb-Tengri.[81] For the first incident, Qasar was arrested by Temüjin under the influence of the shaman, their mother Hö'elün travelled all night to intercede in favour of her younger son. She confronted Temüjin. In front of his mother, Temüjin was 'afraid of mother getting so angry' and felt 'shame and was really abashed'.[82] The second case, Temüge's humiliation, was resolved thanks to the intervention of

Börte. When the youngest brother of the Khan went to Temüjin's tent in order to protest against the humiliation wrought upon him by Teb-Tengri, the princess spoke before the Khan and said: 'How will people covertly injuring in this fashion your younger brothers … ever allow my three or four little "naughty ones" [sons] to govern while they are still growing up?'[83] This expression of common sense and political vision expressed by the *khātūn* led Temüjin to punish the great shaman. The incident seems to have served to warn Chinggis Khan later on of the threat that strong religious leaders could pose to his hegemony over the empire. In fact, in the Mongol Empire, there was no religious leader as powerful as Teb-Tengri had been, at least not until the time of Qubilai Khan (r. 1260–94) and the figure of the Tibetan monk Phags-Pa Lama, who, interestingly enough, had the support of Qubilai's wife Chabui Khatun.[84]

We can conclude that the political life of Temüjin's early career was marked by the frequent intervention of his mother and chief wife. The different succession struggles faced by Temüjin were resolved thanks to the pragmatic involvement of these women who fought for his right to the throne, advised him on how to deal with the opposition and even pointed out any incorrect political decisions that he made. This model of politically active and outspoken women among the Mongol royal family would be exported beyond the context of pre-imperial Mongolia and into the Mongol Empire. The phenomenon of female interaction in politics would remain after the death of Chinggis Khan, but it adapted to the new challenges that world domination and a sedentary subject population demanded. Despite their political involvement, neither those women who had close family ties with Temüjin nor any others in pre-imperial Mongolia were recognised as rulers in the way their daughters would be in the mid-thirteenth century (see Chapter 2). The next section looks at possible precedents for the transformation in role from that of pre-imperial women with a clear political *savoir faire*, an active participation in courtly affairs and an influence over their husbands' political decisions to one of being recognised kingmakers, regents and even empresses of the Mongol Empire.

The Ruling Women of Medieval Eurasia: In Search of a Possible Precedent

In recent years, George Zhao and Richard Guisso have suggested that, among the Mongols,

> there was no statutory succession law. This enabled a number of Mongolian empresses to play an important role in the political arena of the Mongol

> Empire, and they were often entrusted by the Mongol princes with the affairs of the empire in the absence of khans during a transitional period. Most of the time, they were able to effectively and fairly conduct state affairs with the help of ministers until a new Khan was elected.[85]

However, when the Mongols started their military expansion into Northern China and Central Asia, women acting as regents and rulers were already known in these areas. The case of Princess Wu Setian (r. 690–705), who founded and became empress of her own dynasty during the Tang period of China (618–907), and the elusive case of the 'Khatun of Bukhara' in Central Asia during the eighth century suggest that, despite the exceptionality of the phenomenon, a woman could be entrusted with the affairs of state.[86] Nor was the occurrence unknown in more western regions of Asia before the Mongol invasion. Within the Great Saljuq dynasty (1037–1157) and its successor kingdoms, such as the Khwarazmshah (1077–1220), the Saljuqs of Rum (1077–1307), Hamadan (1118–94) and Kerman (1041–1187), a number of women actively participated in politics and were fundamental in maintaining a complex network of marriage alliances between these kingdoms.[87] However, there is no evidence to suggest that any of these Saljuq women were recognised as official rulers of the empire, which was the case with Empress Wu in China. Among the Mongols, without a customary law stating the possibility of female rule, or a precedent in Mongol tradition for women officially taking charge of the affairs of state, this practice must have been borrowed from one of the conquered states or from a neighbouring people. And, because there is no indication that female rule was recognised among the Muslim kingdoms of the Middle East and Iran, the appearance of women's rule in Western Asia must have occurred after the Mongol conquest and not before.

Nomadic heritage and women's rule in Western Asia: Saljuqs, Ayyubids and the rise of the Mamluks

Despite sharing a common mythological and geographical origin, the Saljuqs and other Turkic dynasties that ruled Iran before 1258 differed significantly from the Mongols in various aspects of their respective societies. First, the Saljuqs had entered the lands of the Abbasid caliphate in the eleventh century after having converted to Islam and found rather quick recognition as rulers by the local population. Second, despite their military superiority, they recognised the spiritual supremacy of the caliph, who was a source of legitimacy and potential opposition.[88] By contrast, the Mongols arrived in the Middle East in two waves. The first wave was as

part of a military campaign (1218–23) led by Chinggis Khan that destroyed the empire of the Khwarazmshah in Central Asia and severely damaged regions such as Khurasan and eastern Iran politically, economy and culturally.[89] The second was a campaign of slow advance and planned occupation led by Hülegü (d. 1265), in which this pagan-Mongol commander – under the orders of his also pagan brother and Great Khan Möngke (d. 1259) – destroyed the Ismaili stronghold in Alamut, conquered Baghdad in 1258 and executed the Abbasid caliph only months later.[90]

Despite the quick recognition as rulers from their settled subjects in Iran, the Saljuqs continued their semi-nomadic lifestyle, which might explain the high degree of political involvement, economic independence and literary achievement of noble and upper-middle-class women in Saljuq Iran, still culturally connected to its nomadic past.[91] However, their previous Islamisation and their relations with the caliph in Baghdad would have had an influence on the relationship between the Saljuq rulers and the sedentary Persian religious establishment of the court. As Carole Hillenbrand has suggested, we must be careful when interpreting portrayals of women in the sources, since these generally express an idealised conception of their role rather than a picture of the reality of the time.[92] However, for the purpose of this chapter, it is important to underline the fact that for the Saljuq period there are no records of women being empresses or regents in their domains. Nizam al-Mulk's warning against female rule quoted at the beginning of this chapter might have influenced or at least reflected ideas about the possibility of women taking charge of state affairs.[93] In the Saljuq court, his relationship with Terken Khatun was characterised by personal problems and political rivalry, with the consort of the Malik Shah challenging Nizam's hegemony over state affairs.[94] However, despite her influence and capacity to undermine Nizam's career, Terken Khatun never acquired recognition as de facto ruler of the Saljuq domains and always exercised her power through the figure of the male emperor.[95] The same can be said of other influential women in the Saljuq Empire, such as Toghril Beg's chief wife Altun-jan, Zubaida Khatun (wife of Malik Shah) and the mother of Toghril's son Arslan.[96]

Consequently, a precedent for the Mongol institution of female regency cannot be found in the history of the Saljuq Turks or their dependent states. It was only after the first invasion of the Mongols in the thirteenth century that some isolated cases of female rulers were recorded in the Islamic lands. The first was the Ayyubid Dayfa Khatun (r. 1237–43), who ruled Aleppo on behalf of her grandson al-Malik al-Nasir.[97] This is an interesting precedent, but, as Peter Jackson has pointed out, she did not enjoy 'the privilege of being named in the Friday prayers [*khuṭba*]'.[98] It was not until 1250 when, after the death of al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub, his

favourite wife Shajar al-Durr (r. 1250–7) – mother of Khalil – was elected Sultana of Egypt by the amirs and Bahrites.[99] On this occasion, she was made the 'titular head of the whole state; a royal stamp was issued in her name with the formula "mother of Khalīl" and the *khuṭba* was pronounced in her name as Sultana of Cairo and Egypt'.[100]

A common element shared in the historical context in which these women became regents in their territories was the increasing influence that the Turkish-origin population exercised in both Egypt and Syria (especially in the region of Aleppo) in the first half of the thirteenth century.[101] Yasser Tabbaa suggests three factors that might explain the accession to power of women in the Middle East. First, he stresses that these women were princesses of noble origin and not concubines confined in harems as recounted in the studies of the Abbasid and Ottoman dynasties.[102] This socio-economic condition – following Tabbaa's explanation – might have allowed these women greater freedom of movement and, indeed, the capacity to manoeuvre in the court.[103] Second, he claims that political marriages gave these women protection, since their role was fundamental in maintaining the unity of the Ayyubid 'family confederacy'.[104] Finally, their capacity to give birth to a male child – a potential ruler – increased their status.[105] There is, though, something that has not been considered in this picture. The nomadic Turkish component in the cultural, political and ethnic spheres of medieval Middle Eastern societies went through one of its periods of greatest influence in the thirteenth century. As mentioned above, the area of Aleppo ruled by Dayfa Khatun seems to have been a region where the Turks played a pivotal role in society.[106] In addition, the establishment of Shajar al-Durr – a Turk herself – as Sultana of Egypt has been interpreted as an indication of the rising influence of the Mamluks in Egypt.[107] The increase in power of Turkish people with a nomadic past (or a memory of it) should also be taken into account when trying to understand the social and political circumstances that allowed the emergence of female rule in the Middle East prior to the second Mongol invasion during the 1250s. Nonetheless, a contrast should be mentioned between the political involvement and social recognition of these Middle Eastern women vis-à-vis their contemporary Mongol *khātūns*. As we see in Chapter 2, by the time Dayfa Khatun was maintaining power by 'avoiding controversial acts' and asking not to be 'mentioned in the *Khuṭba*',[108] the Mongols had an empress (Töregene) who was signing edicts, engaging in diplomacy and actively taking government decisions that influenced the destiny of the Mongol Empire.

Is it a coincidence that these women had Turkish-Central Asian origins? Is it a coincidence that female rule occurred in the Middle East only after the first invasion of the Mongols? The appearance of women

in the Middle East who were recognised as rulers of states did not occur until the late 1230s. So, the phenomenon is not perhaps a precedent for the Mongol institution of women's regency, but rather reflects changing socio-political circumstances in the Middle East after the Mongol invasion under Chinggis Khan (1218–25).[109] The existing political involvement of women in Turco-nomadic societies, as seen in pre-imperial Mongolia, did not seem to evolve into the institution of female rule in the Saljuq Empire, but simply continued to limit the role of women in state affairs to the areas of counselling male rulers and amirs, and influencing their decision-making. The isolated examples of women acquiring ruler status in Western Asia occurred after the Mongol invasion and they are not, therefore, the precedent we are looking for which might help us to understand the rise of Mongol queens and empresses. It would seem prudent, then, to look elsewhere for the origin of female regency among the Mongols.

The nomadic element in female rule in Central Asia: the Khwarazmshahs and the Qarakhitai

If the Mongols did not acquire the institution of women's regency from the Muslim states they had conquered in Western Asia or from their Turkic predecessors, the alternative place to look for a precedent of this practice would be the eastern lands of their empire. Mainland China was not, as we have seen, rich in examples of female rule. However, Northern China had been dominated by nomadic dynasties since the early tenth century up until the arrival of the Mongols. The Liao dynasty (r. 916–1125)[110] and later the Jin dynasty (r. 1115–1234) ruled 'major parts of modern Manchuria, of Inner and Outer Mongolia and the north-eastern parts of China proper'.[111] The first dynasty saw the rise of women's rule from its very beginning. During the reign of A-pao-chi'i (r. 907–26), the founder of the dynasty, his wife Ch'un-ch'in (later Empress Dowager Ying-t'ien) exerted her influence on various aspects of society.[112] When A-pao-chi'i died, she refused to be buried with him (which was the tradition), but instead asked for her hand to be cut off and placed in her husband's tomb while she continued controlling the army and the succession to the throne.[113] Although her husband's wish had been that the throne should pass to his eldest son, she managed to change the line of succession in favour of her second son, and then immediately assumed control herself. She defined her position as regent, claiming that 'her sons were still young and the country was without a ruler'. By establishing this institutional precedent, 'she remained in firm control while the succession was settled and exercised great influence for many years to come'.[114] This practice was not an isolated case and,

although the case of Ch'un-ch'in has no equal in scope, Liao China saw the rise of other women who ascended to the throne and controlled the affairs of the kingdom.[115] The recognition of their high rank in the governmental structure of the Liao dynasty is borne out by the fact that imperial envoys were accompanied by a same-rank delegate sent by the emperor's mother and also by the biographies dedicated to the empresses in the *Liao Shih*.[116] So, the already influential women among this nomadic dynasty went a step forward and gained nominal recognition of their role in society as dowager empresses ruling in the name of their young sons.

In 1125, the Liao dynasty of China was forced to move westwards to Central Asia under pressure from the Jurchen people coming from Manchuria. In their new territories, they consolidated a new dynasty known as the Qarakhitai and ruled over a majority Muslim population.[117] Among the royal family of the Qarakhitai was a more established tradition of female rule than that of their newly conquered territories of Central Asia for, out of the five rulers of this new Central Asian dynasty, two were women.[118] After the death of the first emperor Yeh-lü Ta-shih (r. 1124–43), the empire found itself with an underage heir and so widow, Empress Kan-t'ien (r. 1144–50) Yeh-lü Ta-shih's assumed power in accordance with her late husband's will.[119] The enthronement of a woman as the head of one of the powers of the region did not pass unnoticed by Muslim sources.[120] In fact, Juvayni's description of the accession resembles the formula used later to address the enthronement of Mongol empresses. He mentions that once she had ascended the throne 'as his [Yeh-lü Ta-shih's] successor … [she] began to issue commands [and] all the people yielded obedience to her'.[121] During the seven years of her reign, the political situation in Central Asia did not undergo significant change. The Khwarazmshah dynasty, the western neighbours of the Qarakhitai, continued to pay tribute, respecting an agreement established previously between Yeh-lü Ta-shih and King Atsiz of Khwarazm.[122]

Although information about Empress Kan-t'ien's seven years in office is meagre, it seems that she was not a simple nominal figure but rather performed as an active empress of the realm. Two diplomatic embassies were recorded during her reign. The first was an envoy sent by the Uyghur people to the Jin dynasty of Northern China, taking them news of the death of Yeh-lü Ta-shih. A man named Nien-ko was assigned to follow the envoy back and gather information about the Qarakhitai realm. This act of attempted espionage was discovered and the spy was executed in 1146 by order of the empress.[123] The same source mentions a second embassy sent by the Chin to Central Asia around 1146. When it arrived it found the empress hunting, and the emissary had the temerity not to dis-

mount but to ask the empress to dismount first because he himself was the representative of the 'son of heaven' (the Chinese emperor). The ambassador paid with his life for this act of disrespect: he was pulled from his horse and executed.[124] According to Karl A. Wittfogel, the fact that the account was written thirty years later might mean that the encounter was in fact between the Chin representative and a male dignitary representing the empress. However, this interpretation is 'scarcely necessary in view of the Ch'i-tan tradition that permitted empresses and princesses not only to participate in ceremonial hunts, but also to lead armies and to conduct independent military expeditions'.[125]

In 1150, the empress passed the throne to her son I-lieh (r. 1151–63), who ruled for thirteen years. After his death, his son was also at a young age and 'with her brother's expressed will' the sister of the Qarakhitaid emperor (Gurkhan) assumed control of the realm.[126] Empress Ch'eng t'ien (r. 1164–77) ruled for fourteen years, but there is not much information available regarding her skills or political agenda. What was mostly recorded about her period was a succession of military campaigns into Khwarazmshah territory and sporadic envoys received from China. The first Qarakhitai campaign against the kingdom of Khwarazm was a punishment for the latter's failure to pay the established tribute. Although there is confusion in the chronology of the events,[127] the invasion captured the attention of Muslim chroniclers, since the Shah of Khwarazm died during the attack.[128] There is no evidence, as far as I am aware, that Ch'eng t'ien personally commanded the troops, but it seems clear that the military expeditions which were carried out during her reign helped to trigger the rise of another woman, Terken Khatun, as a politically influential figure in the Khwarazmshah Empire.[129]

In the diplomatic sphere, contacts and trade continued to flow towards the east in the constantly tense relationship between the Qarakhitai and the Jin dynasty of China.[130] At the same time, an interesting relationship was forged in the west:

> Terken Khātūn [mother of the Khwarazmshah Emperor] ordered the gür-khan's envoys to be received with honour and respect. She treated them courteously and paid up the annual tribute in full. She also sent some of the notables of her court to accompany Maḥmūd Tai to the gür-khan and apologize for the delay in payment; and confirmed that the Sultan was still bound by the terms of subjection and submission.[131]

With this renewal of submission, peace was re-established between the kingdoms, a peace forged thanks to the diplomatic ability of these two women. The end of Ch'eng t'ien's reign is, however, shrouded in

an atmosphere of infidelity and jealousy involving the empress and her brother-in-law. When an affair between them was discovered, the queen's father-in-law – the father of both brothers – gathered an army and seized the imperial place, capturing and killing the two lovers.[132]

Although this is a short survey of the institution of regency among the Qarakhitai, its role in state affairs cannot be easily dismissed. Both Barthold and Clifford Edmund Bosworth have suggested that, by the time of Chinggis Khan's arrival in Central Asia, the Qarakhitai Empire 'was weakened by the long periods of regency exercised by women'.[133] However, it seems that the reason for the decline of the Western Liao cannot be based on a preconceived idea of the incapability of women to rule. In fact, the sources suggest otherwise: first, women were chosen by their predecessors as heirs of the kingdom and, second, they actively participated in the development of the empire by acting as empresses with the full right to conduct diplomacy and war with their neighbours. Finally, the empire did not collapse after the last empress was killed in 1177, but continued as the supreme ruling entity in Central Asia for just over forty years until Chinggis Khan conquered it in the second decade of the thirteenth century.

The high status acquired by Terken Khatun in the Khwarazmshah kingdom seems to have been connected to the geographical proximity and close vassalage relationship between the Qarakhitai and this subject Muslim state.[134] The Western Liao dynasty was the most important political power in Central Asia and it did not lose its nomadic attitude of receptivity towards female rule, neither when it originally ruled in Northern China nor when it had moved to the west. Its cultural proximity to the nomadic milieu of the steppes might not only have acted as an inspiration for its Turkish neighbour states like the Khwarazmshah but also functioned as a model when the Mongols conquered these territories. The rise to power of Mongol women such as Töregene Khatun, the political involvement of Sorghaghtani Beki and the rules of Oghul Qaimish and Orghina Khatun, which we will explore later, all found a suitable precedent in the Qarakhitai Empire to legitimise their right to rule, not only in the eyes of Mongols but also among their subjects. The tradition of female regency was not confined to Central Asia, but spread to faraway territories through the Mongol conquest. This, I suggest, is the reason for the appearance of female rulers not only to the west in the Middle East, as we have seen above, but also to the south in India.[135]

An institution that does not confer any benefit cannot be sustained through tough times and will not be incorporated by other states. Women rulers in the Qarakhitai seem to have been neither the cause nor indication of decline that Barthold and Bosworth suggested. On the contrary,

their rule seems to have been in tune with that of their male predecessors and successors, with the result that this tradition was exported into other nomadic or semi-nomadic empires. It is perhaps in nomadism where the key lies to understanding the practice and institutionalisation of women's rule. Wittfogel says: 'The overt rule of women … may well reflect an old Ch'i-tan tradition – a tradition which found expression throughout the Liao Empire, and which, with added force, asserted itself in the "Black" Ch'i-tan dynasties of Hsi Liao and Kirmān'.[136] This 'tradition', present at an embryonic level in pre-imperial Mongolia and then institutionalised by the Qarakhitai, seems to have served as a model later adopted by the Mongols as a common practice in the succession of their leaders. In the following chapter, we look at the materialisation of women's rule in the Mongol Empire in the crucial years of its development.

Notes

1. Husayn ibn ᶜAli Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyāsat'nāmah,* ed. H. Darke (Tehran, 1340/1961) (hereafter, *SN*), p. 226; *The Book of Government, or Rules for Kings: The 'Siyar al-Muluk' or 'Siyāsat-Nāma' of Nizam al-Mulk,* trans. H. Darke (London, 1978) (hereafter, *SND*), p. 179.
2. D. Cortese and S. Calderini, *Women and the Fatimids in the World of Islam* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp. 101–2.
3. B. De Nicola, 'Las mujeres mongolas en los siglos XII y XIII: Un análisis sobre el rol de la madre y la esposa de Chinggis Khan', *Acta Histórica y Arqueológica Medievalia* 27–8 (Barcelona, 2006–7), pp. 37–63.
4. These sources being the *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. I. de Rachewiltz, 2 vols (Leiden and Boston, 2004) (hereafter, *SH*) and the *The Mongol Chronicle Altan Tobĉi*, ed. and trans. C. Bawden (Wiesbaden, 1955) mentioned in the Introduction.
5. *SH*, p. xxxiv.
6. See Figures 1.1 and 1.2 for the ancestors of Chinggis Khan.
7. *SH*, §1. On the debate about the origin of this name and the possibility of it being read Batachi Qan (King Batachi), see de Rachewiltz in *SH*, I, p. 235.
8. *SH*, §10.
9. *SH*, §18. Igor de Rachewiltz points out that the colour yellow or gold symbolises imperial dignity. See I. de Rachewiltz, 'The Ideological Foundations of Chingis Khan's Empire', *Papers in Far Eastern History* 7 (1973), pp. 21–36.
10. T. T. Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', in H. Franke and D. Twitchett, *The Cambridge History of China: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907–1368* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 330; D. Aigle, 'Les transformations d'un mythe d'origine: l'exemple

de Gengis Khan et de Tamerlan', in D. Aigle (ed.), *Figures mythiques de l'Orient musulman* (Paris, 2000), pp. 151–68.
11. *SH*, §21.
12. Allsen, 'Rise of the Mongolian Empire', p. 330.
13. *SH*, §3.
14. On different representations of Alan Qo'a, of particular significance is the illustration made in a manuscript of the *Mu*^{c}*izz al-ansab* copied in India in the nineteenth century, where this woman is dressed in a traditional Afghan burka. See Plate 1.
15. Different Turkic dynasties in the Middle East claimed to be descendants of this legendary ancestor, especially the Saljuqs and the Ottomans. See V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, 4 vols (Leiden, 1956–63), III, pp. 82, 109, 111–16.
16. Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Jāmi*^{c} *al-tawārīkh*, ed. M. Rawshan and M. Mūsavī, 4 vols (Tehran, 1373/1994) (hereafter, *JT*), I, p. 53/*Jami*^{c}*u't-tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*, ed. S. S. Kuru and trans. W. M. Thackston, 3 vols (Boston, 1998) (hereafter, Thackston), p. 30
17. Meaning a 'single god'.
18. *JT*, I, pp. 48–51/Thackston, pp. 28–9.
19. Because they were unbelievers, Oghuz rejected the first two wives offered to him by his father. See *JT*, I, p. 48/Thackston, p. 28.
20. See the case of Börte, wife of Chinggis Khan.
21. *SH*, §1, §38, §40–1.
22. Different examples of these practices can be found, for example, in the story of Qutuqu Noyan in *JT*, I, p. 84/Thackston, p. 47.
23. See notes in *SH*, p. 280.
24. B. Vladimirtsov, *Le régime social des Mongols: le feudalisme nomade*, trans. M. Carsow (Paris, 1948), p. 64.
25. It is important to mention that, despite the incorporation into the clan of children from 'foreign' fathers, they were named in ways that recalled their foreign origin: see *SH*, p. 278. The same can be applied to the doubtful paternity of Jochi, the first son of Chinggis Khan, whose name means 'guest' or 'visitor'; see Lane, *Daily Life*, p. 235.
26. On him, see I. Fujiko, 'A Few Reflections on the Anda Relationship', in L. V. Clark and P. A. Draghi (eds), *Aspects of Altaic Civilization* (Bloomington, 1978), pp. 81–7.
27. *SH*, p. 282.
28. نُومولُون in *JT*, I, p. 229. Here we use 'Numulun' as a transliteration of the name, despite Thackston's transliteration being 'Monolun'.
29. On the role of the *ordo* as a centre of economic activity, see Chapter 4; also, *JT*, I, p. 229/Thackston, p. 119.
30. *JT*, I, p. 91/Thackston, p. 51.
31. J. P. Roux, 'Le chaman chinggiskhanide', *Antrhopos* 54:3/4 (1959), pp. 401–32.

32. *JT*, I, p. 116/Thackston, p. 63.
33. The tribal origin of Qo'a Qulqu is not clear, but Rashid seems to suggest that she belonged to a Qonqirat tribe. See *JT*, I, p. 253/Thackston, p. 128. On Qaidu as the first ruler of 'all the Mongols', see *SH*, §52.
34. *SH*, §53.
35. D. O. Morgan, 'Rašīd al-Dīn and Ghazan Khan', in D. Aigle (ed.), *L'Iran face la domination mongole* (Tehran, 1997), pp. 181–2.
36. *JT*, I, p. 253/Thackston, p. 128.
37. On the participation of Mongol women in warfare, see B. De Nicola, 'Women's Role and Participation in Warfare in the Mongol Empire', in K. Latzel, S. Satjukow and F. Maubach (eds), *Soldatinnen: Gewalt und Geschlecht im Krieg vom Mittelalter bis Heute* (Paderborn, 2010), pp. 95–112.
38. On these two cases see De Nicola, 'Women's Role and Participation in Warfare', pp. 101–4; also M. Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of an Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* (Richmond, 1997), p. 2; ᶜAlaᵓ al-Din ᶜAta Malik Juvayni, *Tārīkh-i jahān-gushā*, ed. M. Qazvini, 3 vols (Leiden and London, 1912–37) (hereafter, *TJG*), I, p. 140/Juvayni, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, trans. J. A. Boyle, 2 vols (Manchester, 1958; reprint 1997 with foreword by D. O. Morgan) (hereafter, Boyle), I, p. 177; Lane, *Daily Life*, pp. 248–50.
39. *JT*, I, p. 92/Thackston, p. 51.
40. See the chapter dedicated to Sorghaghtani Beki in *JT*, II, pp. 791–4/Rashid al-Din Tabib, *The Successors of Genghis Khan,* trans. J. A. Boyle (New York and London, 1971) (hereafter, *Successors*), pp. 168–9.
41. J. Aubin, *Émirs mongols et vizirs persane dans les remous de l'acculturation* (Paris, 1995); C. Melville, 'History and Myth: The Persianisation of Ghazan Khan', in É. M. Jeremiás (ed.), *Irano-Turkic Cultural Contacts in the 11th–17th Centuries* (Piliscsaba, 2003), pp. 133–60.
42. *JT*, I, p. 91/Thackston, p. 51.
43. See *JT*, I, p. 91. Tabaray Qayan's advice is also underlined by P. Pelliot and L. Hambis (eds/trans.), *Histoire des campagnes de Gengis Khan: Cheng-Wou Ts'in-Tcheng Lou* (Leiden, 1951), p. 242.
44. *JT*, I, p. 91/Thackston, p. 51. This means that Sariq realised that his fortune might change thanks to the advice of this woman and therefore decided to search for protection under another ruler.
45. *SH*, p. 284.
46. On the problematic genealogy of Numulun, see *SH*, pp. 283–4.
47. *JT*, I, p. 229/Thackston, p. 119.
48. See M. Rossabi, 'Khubilai Khan and the Women in his Family', in W. Bauer (ed.), *Studia Sino-Mongolica: Festschrift Fur Herbert Franke* (Wiesbaden, 1979), p. 160.
49. On the Jalayirs, see Pelliot and Hambis, *Histoire des campagnes*, pp. 65–6.
50. The Persian edition of Rashid al-Din's work mentions هفتاد خانه in order to

underline that only a portion of the Jalayir tribe participated in the struggle with Numulun. See *JT*, I, p. 230.

51. *JT*, I, pp. 230–1/Thackston, p. 119.
52. See *JT*, I, pp. 230–1/Thackston, pp. 119–20.
53. *JT*, I, p. 231/Thackston, p. 119. This episode seems to be in line with Atwood's claim that Rashid is 'retrojecting all status to one's position in the imperial founding' by stressing that the position of the Jalayir tribe is subordinate to the Chinggiskhanid family. See C. P. Atwood, 'Mongols, Arabs, Kurds, and Franks: Rashid al-Din's Comparative Anthropology of Tribal Society', conference paper presented at 'Rashid al-Din as an Agent and Mediator of Cross-Pollinations in Religion, Medicine, Science and Art' (London, 9 November 2007).
54. Also mentioned in *SH*, §128; he was a relative of Chinggis Khan's *anda* Jamuqa. See I. Fujiko, 'A Few Reflections on the Anda Relationship', in L. V. Clark and P. A. Draghi (eds), *Aspects of Altaic Civilization* (Bloomington, 1978), pp. 81–7.
55. *JT*, I, p. 237/Thackston, pp. 159–60.
56. On the Keraits, see D. M. Dunlop, 'Keraits of Eastern Asia', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 11:2 (1944), pp. 276–89; E. Hunter, 'The Conversion of the Kerait to Christianity in A.D. 1007', *Zentralasiatische Studien* 22 (1989–91), pp. 142–63. On the connections between the Keraits and the Chinggisid family, see Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4.
57. On the connection between the Merkits and the Mongols, see P. Pelliot, 'À propos des Comans', *Journal Asiatique* April–June (1920), pp. 145–7. On the campaign against the Tatars, see *JT*, I, pp. 359–72.
58. In the first incident, two daughters of the Merkit ruler Toqto'a Beki (named Cha'alun Khatun and Qutuotai Khatun) were among the booty. See *JT*, I, p. 364/Thackston, p. 176.
59. *JT*, I, p. 389/Thackston, p. 188.
60. Such as Sorghaghtani Beki and Doquz Khatun, among others.
61. *JT*, I, p. 373/Thackston, p. 185. The same episode is mentioned, albeit with some modifications, in the narrative in *The Secret History of the Mongols* (see *SH*, §169).
62. *JT*, I, p. 127/Thackson, p. 68. On the levirate system, see J. Holmgren, 'Observations on Marriage and Inheritances in Early Mongol Yüan Society, with Particular Reference to the Levirate', *Journal of Asian History* 20 (1986), pp. 127–92.
63. *SH*, §189.
64. P. Ratchnevsky, *Chinggis Khan: His Life and Legacy* (Oxford, 2003), p. 83; *SH*, §194. For the involvement of women in military affairs, see De Nicola, 'Women's Role and Participation', pp. 95–112.
65. In fact, she is the one who opens and closes the story of the Naimans in the *SH*. See P. Kahn, 'Instruction and Entertainment in the Naiman Battle Text: An Analysis of §189 through §196 of *The Secret History of the Mongols*', in

M. and W. Sclepp Gervers (eds), *Cultural Contacts: History and Ethnicity in Inner Asia* (Toronto, 1996), p. 97.

66. *SH*, §189.
67. *SH*, §194.
68. *SH*, §194.
69. Kahn, 'Instruction and Entertainment', p. 104. Because she is not listed in the *Yuan Shih* as a concubine, Anne Broadbridge has suggested that Gürbesü might be actually a wife and not a concubine of the Naiman ruler. I thank Anne F. Broadbridge for this observation, email September 2016.
70. Ambaqai Khan was the leader of the Tayichi'ut, a clan belonging to the Mongol tribe, and a relative of Yesügei.
71. *SH*, §70.
72. *SH*, p. 343.
73. *SH*, p. 244; B. Vladimirtsov, *Le régime social des Mongols: le feudalisme nomade*, trans. M. Carsow (Paris, 1948), p. 63; O. Lattimore, 'Chingis Khan and the Mongol Conquests', *Scientific American* 209:2 (1963), p. 60.
74. *SH*, §73.
75. The episode echoes the role played by women such as Sorghaghtani Beki and Töregene Khatun in their attempts to promote their children to the khanate. The difference lies in the way in which the role of women is presented at the time of Temüjin – the image of Hö'elün riding with the banners – namely, a way that would appeal to the nomadic audience of *The Secret History*, compared with the highlighting of the diplomatic skills of the *khātūns* in the 1240s and 1250s described by the Persian sources. See Chapter 2.
76. See Fujiko, 'A Few Reflections', pp. 81–7.
77. On the kidnapping of Börte, see *SH*, §102; J. P. Roux, *Histoire de l'empire mongole* (Paris, 1993), pp. 87–8. Rashid al-Din also mentions the event but gives a milder version of the story, emphasising that the captors 'respected her chastity'. See *JT*, I, p. 72/Thackston, p. 41.
78. *SH*, §118.
79. *SH*, §119.
80. See notes on §118 in *SH*, p. 442. *The Secret History* suggests that this was Hö'elü's final political intervention and that she died soon after this event. However, Moses has pointed out that the reference to her death at this point might be only an epic motif to serve the narrative of the Secret History and therefore the actual moment of her death is unknown. See L. Moses, 'The Quarreling Sons in the Secret History of the Mongols', *The Journal of American Folklore* 100:395 January–March (1987), pp. 63–8.
81. *SH*, §245.
82. *SH*, §244.
83. *SH*, §245.
84. M. Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 41.
85. G. Zhao and R. W. Guisso, 'Female Anxiety and Female Power': The Political Involvement of Mongol Empresses during the 13th and

14th Centuries', *Toronto Studies in Central and Inner Asia* 7 (2005), pp. 20–1.

86. See R. Guisso, 'The Reigns of the Empress Wu, Chung-Tsung and Jui-Tsung (684–712)', in D. Twitchett (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China: Sui and T'ang China, 589–906*, vol. III, part 1 (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 290–332; J. Holmgren, 'Political Organisation of Non-Han States in China: The Role of Imperial Princes in Wei, Liao and Yuan', *Journal of Oriental Studies* 25 (1987)', pp. 1–37. On the story of the 'Khatun of Bukhara' as a ruler in Central Asia during the Arab conquest of the 8th century, see R. Frye, 'Women in Pre-Islamic Central Asia: The Khātun of Bukhara', in G. R. Hambly (ed.), *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage, and Piety* (New York, 1998), pp. 55–68.
87. A. Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia: Aspects of Administrative, Economic and Social History* (New York, 1988), pp. 258–71.
88. See ᶜIzz al-Din ibn al-Athir, *The Annals of the Saljuq Turks: Selections from 'al-Kāmil fīʾl-Taʾrīkh' of ᶜIzz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr*, trans. D. S. Richards (London, 2002), p. 203.
89. L. de Hartog, *Genghis Khan: Conqueror of the World* (London, 2004), pp. 94–123.
90. See, among others, J. A. Boyle, 'The Death of the Last 'Abbasid Caliph: A Contemporary Muslim Account', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 6:2 (1961), pp. 145–61.
91. For an overview of women in the Saljuq period, see C. Hillenbrand, 'Women in the Saljuq Period', in G. Nashat and L. Beck (eds), *Women in Islam: From the Rise of Islam to 1800* (Chicago, 2003), pp. 103–20.
92. Hillenbrand, 'Women in the Saljuq Period', p. 116.
93. *SN*, p. 226/*SND*, p. 179.
94. Cortese and Calderini, *Women and the Fatimids*, pp. 101–2.
95. C. E. Bosworth, 'The Political and Dynastic History of the Iranian World (A.D. 1000–1217)', in J. A. Boyle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V (Cambridge, 1968), p. 77.
96. For aspects of political intervention of these Seljuq women see A. K. S. Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, pp. 259–72.
97. See Y. Tabbaa, 'Ḍaīfa Khātūn, Regent Queen and Architectural Patron', in D. F. Ruggles, *Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies* (New York, 2000), pp. 17–34.
98. P. Jackson, 'Sultan Radiyya Bint Iltutmish', in G. R. Hambly (ed.), *Women in the Medieval Islamic World* (Bloomsburg, PA, 1998), p. 181; E. J. Costello, *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (London, 1984), p. 298; Ahmad ibn ᶜAli al-Maqrizi, *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt*, ed. and trans. R. J. C. Broadhurst (Boston, 1980) (hereafter, MK), p. 224.
99. A. Levanoni, 'Sagar Ad-Durr: A Case of Female Sultanate in Medieval Islam', in U. Vermeulan and D. De Smet (eds), *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, vol. III (Leuven, 2001), pp. 209–18.

100. F. Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, trans. E. J. Costello (London, 1957), pp. 297–8. See Jackson, 'Sultan Radiyya', p. 181.
101. For Syria, see A.-M. Eddé, 'Origins géographiques et ethniques de la population alépine au XIIIe siècle', in U. Vermeulan and D. De Smet (eds), *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, vol. II (Leuven, 1998), pp. 201–2. For Egypt, see Gabrieli, *Arab Historians*, p. 297, fn. 1.
102. See, for example, L. Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven and London, 1992); for the Ottoman case, see L. P. Pierce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York, 1993).
103. Tabbaa, 'Ḍaīfa Khātūn', pp. 19–20.
104. Tabbaa, 'Ḍaīfa Khātūn', p. 20.
105. Tabbaa, 'Ḍaīfa Khātūn', p. 20.
106. Eddé, 'Origins géographiques', pp. 191–208.
107. See, for example, Jackson, 'Sultan Radiyya', p. 189. Less specific references can be found in R. Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1382* (London, 1986), p. 26, and 'Factions in Medieval Egypt', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2 (1986), pp. 228–46.
108. Tabbaa construes Dayfa Khatun's name not being mentioned in the *khuṭba* as her decision to keep a low profile. Jackson, on the other hand, sees this as characteristic of the lower status of regency compared to Shajar al-Durr in Egypt and Radiyya bint Iltutmish in the Delhi Sultanate. See Tabbaa, 'Ḍaīfa Khātūn', p. 31; Jackson, 'Sultan Radiyya', p. 181.
109. On the first Mongol invasion to the west, see, among many others, J. Chambers, *The Devil's Horsemen: The Mongol Invasion of Europe* (New York, 1979), pp. 1–50; D. O. Morgan, *The Mongols* (Cambridge, MA, 1986; rev. edn 2007), pp. 61–83; D. Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia, and Mongolia*, vol. 1 (Malden, MA, 1998), pp. 399–405.
110. The Liao dynasty is commonly referred to as the Khitan dynasty.
111. K. A. Wittfogel and J. Feng, *History of Chinese Society: Liao (907–1225)* (Philadelphia, 1949), p. 41.
112. See D. Twitchett and K. P. Tietze, 'The Liao', in H. Franke and D. Twitchett (eds), *The Cambridge History of China: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907–1368* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 68.
113. Twitchett and Tietze, 'The Liao', p. 68.
114. Twitchett and Tietze, 'The Liao', p. 68.
115. See, for example, the description of the reign of Ch'eng-Tien in Twitchett and Tietze, 'The Liao', pp. 87–91.
116. Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese Society*, pp. 199–200.
117. According to Juvayni, the exodus was embarked upon by the emperor and eighty members of his family. For a discussion of the terminology, see Boyle, I, p. 354, fn. 3.
118. M. Biran, *The Empire of the Qara Khitai in Eurasian History: Between China and the Islamic World* (New York, 2005), pp. 160–1.

119. *Liao Shih* quoted in Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese Society*, p. 643.
120. *TJG*, II, pp. 88–9/Boyle, I, p. 356; Minhaj Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqāt-i Nāṣīrī*, ed. ᶜA. Habibi, 2 vols (Kabul, 1342–3/1963–4), II, pp. 95–6/*'Tabaḳāt-i Nāṣirī': A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia, Including Hindustan, from A.H. 194 (810 A.D.), to A.H. 658 (1260 A.D.) and the Irruption of the Infidel Mughals into Islam*, trans. H. G. Raverty (London, 1881) (hereafter, Raverty), p. 911; ᶜIzz al-Din ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the Crusading Period from 'al-Kāmil fīʾl-Taʾrīkh'*, trans. D. S. Richards, 3 vols (Aldershot, 2006–8), I, p. 363. A translation of Ibn al-Athir is also available in E. Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources*, 2 vols (London, 1910), I, pp. 231–3.
121. Juvayni calls her Kuyunk (کویونک), which Boyle translates as 'Kuyang'; see *TJG*, II, pp. 88–9/Boyle, I, p. 356.
122. *TJG*, II, p. 88/Boyle, I, p. 356. Juvayni says he payed 3,000 dinars annually.
123. This embassy is recorded in the official history of the Jin dynasty (*Jin shih*), see *Chin Shih* 4, 11a and 121, 4b, quoted in Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese Society*, p. 643.
124. See *Chin Shih* 121, 5a–b, quoted in Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese Society*, p. 643.
125. Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese Society*, p. 643, fn. 3.
126. Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese Society*, p. 644.
127. According to Barthold, the most accurate date for Il-Arslan's death is the one given by Ibn al-Athir as 1172. See V. V. Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion* (London, 1928), pp. 336–7.
128. *TJG*, II, p. 14/Boyle, I, p. 289; Hamd Allah Mustawfi Qazvini, *The 'Ta'rikh-i-Guzida': or 'Select History' of Hamduʾllah Mustawfí-i-Qazwini*, ed. and trans. E. G. Browne, 2 vols (Leiden and London, 1910–13), p. 112; Ibn al-Athir mentions the event in the year 567 (1171–2) and says that the Sultan died of an illness and not in battle. See Ibn al-Athir, *Chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr*, vol. II, p. 201.
129. She was the mother of the new Shah of Khwarazm, Muhammad. See *JT*, I, p. 474/Thackston, p. 234.
130. See *Chin Shih* 121, 4b–5a; 7, 7b; 88, 16b–17a. All quoted in Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese Society*, p. 646.
131. *TJG*, II, p. 90/Boyle, p. 358.
132. *Liao Shih* 30, 7a, quoted in Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese Society*, p. 646.
133. Bosworth, 'Political and Dynastic History', p. 189. This idea is also expressed by Barthold, *Four Studies*, I, p. 105.
134. See Jackson, 'Sultan Radiyya', p. 190, and references in fn. 61.
135. See the case of Radiyya Khatun analysed by Jackson, 'Sultan Radiyya', pp. 181–97.
136. Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese Society*, p. 672.

2

Regents and Empresses: Women's Rule in the Mongols' World Empire

The Mongol Empire had a quality that was not characteristic of the other empires built by nomadic khans: it continued to expand after the death of its charismatic founder (Chinggis Khan) and almost doubled its territorial possessions under the rule of his successors.[1] But, one attribute it did share with the other nomadic empires was the problem of securing a peaceful succession to the throne. The elective nature of the Mongol succession often created periods of interregnum between the death of a ruler and the reunion of the assembly of notables (*quriltai*) in charge of designating the new ruler.[2] This became more problematic as the empire expanded, since bringing together all the royal family members scattered across Eurasia in order to elect a new ruler took a long time and opened up periods of power vacuum that created instability in the empire. The first occasion on which a regent was needed in the Mongol Empire occurred immediately after the death of Chinggis Khan in 1227. Although, according to the sources, the heir to the throne – Ögetei Khan (d. 1241) – had been designated beforehand by the Great Khan,[3] the Mongol succession tradition made it necessary to wait for two years until all the relevant members of the royal family had reunited and elected – or rather confirmed – the new ruler.[4] Some sources have speculated that Chinggis Khan's wife Börte was the regent in this period;[5] however, it seems clear that Börte died before her husband.[6] A biennium without a ruler would have been a dangerous political move for an empire in expansion. Tolui (the youngest son of Chinggis Khan) was therefore named regent until his brother was confirmed on the throne in 1229,[7] a move that followed a questionable tradition of ultimogeniture among the Mongols.[8] As we discover, in particular moments in the history of the Mongol Empire, these power vacuums created by the Mongols' elective system would often be filled by women.

Although, as we have seen in Chapter 1, women did wield influence in Mongolia before the rise of Chinggis Khan, it was necessary to wait more than a decade after Ögetei's accession in 1229 to see the first woman take charge of the empire's affairs and be recognised as an empress of

the realm.[9] Then, for twenty years, the fate of Mongol world domination rested in the hands of women who were different from each other in terms of their status, their influence and the outcomes of their political adventures. This chapter looks at the history of the Mongol Empire during this period of special prominence of women in politics by looking at the lives and deeds of a number of powerful Mongol ladies. First is explored the reign of Ögetei Khan's wife, Töregene Khatun (r. 1241–6), first empress regent of the Mongols. Second, the role of Sorghaghtani Beki (d. 1251/2), wife of Tolui and arguably the power behind the throne, is considered vis-à-vis the reign of the second Mongol regent Oghul Qaimish (r. 1248–50). Finally, our attention is focused on the extensive reign of Orghina Khatun (d. 1266) in Central Asia as an example of the continuity of this practice of female rule in a Mongol khanate. All these cases show how a nomadic tradition of women's rule was adopted, implemented and exploited in the Mongol Empire during the mid-thirteenth century.

Töregene Khatun: Empress of the World Empire

Like many other Mongol women prior to 1206, Töregene Khatun's (d. 1246) incorporation into Chinggis Khan's royal family was the result of the military defeat of her tribal group by followers of the expanding Mongol confederacy.[10] Belonging to a subjugated group of people did not prevent these women from becoming powerful figures in the developing Mongol Empire. Originally, Töregene was the wife of Tayir-Usun, chief of the Uhaz clan of the Merkits, which had a long history of rivalry with Temüjin over the possession of women.[11] After the defeat of the Merkits, the future Chinggis Khan decided to give Töregene in marriage to Ögetei, his third son by his chief wife Börte. She was not the eldest wife of her new husband, but gave birth to five of the seven sons of the Mongol Empire's second ruler.[12] As we have seen in Chapter 1, the position of women within the family structure was fundamental to their being able to influence the affairs of state. So, when Ögetei died in 1241, it seems that it was not only her position as wife of the deceased ruler, but also her role as mother of Ögetei's eldest sons, that gave legitimacy to Töregene assuming the regency of the empire on behalf of her son.[13]

But this succession to the throne of the Mongol Empire was not a straightforward process. According to Rashid al-Din, the heir chosen to succeed the Khan was his third son Köchü (also a son of Töregene), but he had died before his father. In preparation for his succession, Ögetei 'brought up [Köchü's] eldest son, Shiremün, who was exceedingly fortunate and intelligent, in his own *ordo* and decreed that he was to be his

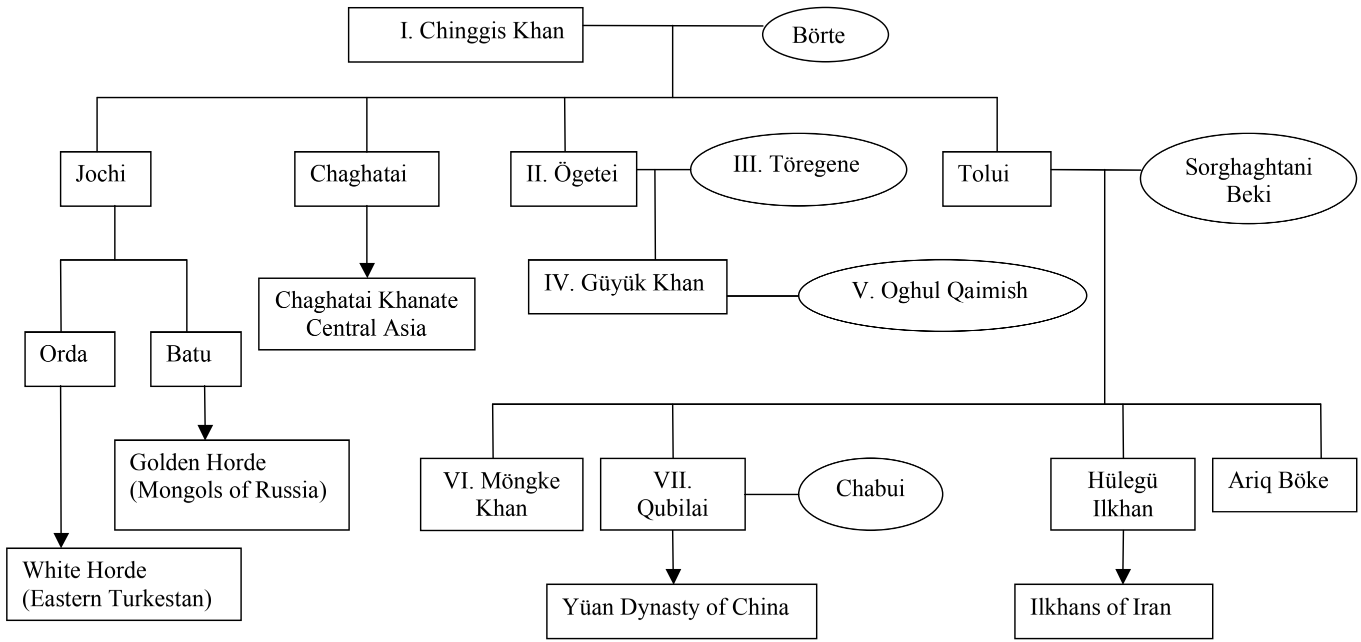


Figure 2.1 The Great Khans and empresses of the Mongol Empire

heir and successor'.[14] Yet, when Ögetei died in the year 1241, Töregene and a group of amirs objected to the election of Shiremün and interceded in favour of Güyük (her eldest son) with the argument that the eldest of the sons should succeed the father.[15] The argument is given in the sources as a self-explanatory statement, but it was not in accordance with either Chinggis Khan's succession or the wishes of Ögetei. Possibly motivated by the dislike of some Persian sources to women's rule, Töregrene's political ascension is presented as an act of vengeance by Rashid al-Din: 'having been offended by certain persons during Qa'an's reign, and these feelings of resentment [having been] rooted in her heart, she resolved, now that she was absolute ruler, to wreak vengeance upon each of those persons'.[16]

The impact of Töregene's reign and its recognition as a noteworthy period in Mongol history is reflected in the uncommon description of her appearance and capacities left by the chroniclers of the time. Rashid al-Din described Töregene as being of 'no great beauty but of a very masterful nature',[17] and Juvayni wrote that she was 'a very shrewd and capable woman, and her position was greatly strengthened by this unity and concord'.[18] These two authors were more sympathetic to the Toluid branch of the Chinggisid family, but both recognised Töregene's capacity to rule, a view that can also be found in the Christian and Chinese sources.[19] Her accession to the throne was not, however, as smooth as it may appear. Juvayni's account reveals a much more complex scenario regarding the access of women to the regency, mentioning that because Güyük had not returned from his campaign in the west by the time of his father's death, the assembly of people (*quriltai*) 'took place at the door of the *ordu* of his wife, Möge Khatun, who, in accordance with Mongol custom, had come to him from his father, Chinggis Khan'.[20] Möge Khatun is one of the neglected women in the Mongol Empire. She was given to Chinggis Khan by a chief of the *Bakrin* tribe and he loved her very much … but he had no children by her."[21] When Chinggis died, she passed to Ögetei, who quickly married her to prevent his brother Chaghatai from claiming the *khātūn*.[22]

An indication of her high status can be observed in the fact that Möge was taken on the royal hunting expeditions under Ögetei Khan while no other woman is mentioned as having been part of the expeditions.[23] It seems that she quickly became the favourite wife of Ögetei and that 'he [Ögetei] loved her more than his other wives – so much that they were jealous of her'.[24] So, if the position of women in relation to the ruler was the fundamental factor in the election of a regent, then all the signs would point towards Möge being the ideal regent after Ögetei's death. However,

the chroniclers explain Töregene's election by reference to her position as the mother of the Khan's eldest son and Juvayni seems to suggest that it was Töregene's diplomatic and political ability that took her to the throne. Möge was a former wife of Chinggis Khan, the favourite of Ögetei and preferred by other influential members of the royal family, but, despite these attributes,

> Töregene Khātūn was the mother of his eldest son and was moreover shrewder and more sagacious than Möge Khātūn, she sent messages to the princes … and said that until a Khan was appointed by agreement someone would have to be ruler and leader in order that the business of the state might not be neglected nor the affairs of the commonweal thrown into confusion … Chaghatai and the other princes sent representatives to say that Töregene Khātūn was the mother of the princes who had the right to khanate. Therefore, until a *quriltai* was held, it was she who should direct the affairs of state.[25]

Möge died shortly after her husband and did not present any opposition to Töregene's regency. Although Juvayni mentions the fact that Töregene was the mother of the eldest son of the dead Khan, he puts the emphasis for her election on being the result of her diplomatic skills and the support given her by other members of the royal family, especially the Chaghataid branch of Mongols. But to what extent did this recognition as empress and legitimate ruler of the empire allow Töregene to have real control over the government? In other words, did she really have the chance to develop a political agenda of her own? Her accession to the throne was not as peaceful as the transition from Chinggis Khan to his son Ögetei. She had to deploy diplomatic and political skills in order to tackle pockets of resistance to her reign by viziers who rejected her authority and ruled their districts in rebellion.[26] Members of her own family also contested her authority because of her political decision to replace several governors appointed by Ögetei such as the Yelü Chucai (Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai) and Mahmud Yalavach in Northern China, Mas^{c}ud Beg in Central Asia and Körgüz in the western territories.[27]

Yelü Chucai (d. 1243) and Mahmud Yalavach sought refuge with Ögetei's son Köten,[28] who welcomed and protected them in the Tangut territories under his control, consistently rejecting the empress's requests that he hand over the refugees.[29] Unhappy with this insubordination, the empress regent seems to have exercised her right to administer justice when she ordered the arrest of Körgüz. He was put on trial in Töregene's *ordo* and executed by the Chaghataids after being found guilty.[30] The case of Mahmud Yalavach illustrates the ability with which Töregene played her cards in the political arena. This amir had confronted Chaghatai while Ögetei was still alive, forcing the Khan to relocate Yalavach from the

administration of Central Asia to that of China. When Töregene came to power, one of her first measures was to try to capture the amir while also obtaining Chaghatai's support.[31]

Despite her attempts to exercise a firm control over the growing number of dissident officials and members of the royal family, the number of upheavals grew during Töregene's reign. Chinggis Khan's brother Otchigin Noyan (Temüge) 'thought to seize the throne by force and violence. With this intention he set out for the *ordo* of Qa'an at the head of a large army and with much gear and equipment',[32] marching towards the Mongol capital in Qaraqorum.[33] The revolt failed, and the reasons given for this by the sources vary. On the one hand, Rashid al-Din draws attention to Töregene's diplomatic skills, giving them as the main reason why Otchigin's advance was stopped; Juvayni, on the other hand, emphasises the role played by one of Chinggis Khan's grandsons (Mengli Oghul, a son of Ögetei Khan) in stopping Otchigin from attacking the Mongol capital. Both authors, however, note that this event coincided with the arrival of Güyük (r. 1246–8), Töregene's son and heir to Ögetei, from the battlefront, which might have calmed the tensions among the royal families and given a certain legitimacy to Töregene's regency. Yet, despite his arrival, 'when Güyük came to his mother, he took no part in affairs of state, and Töregene Khātūn still executed the decrees of the Empire although the khanate was settled upon her son'.[34]

The direct intervention of the empress regent in all these matters suggests that Töregene's reign was not a simple female interregnum between male rulers. On the contrary, she took an active role in protecting her reign from internal opposition and actively promoted a restructuring of the empire's administration. The already-mentioned removal of governors in China and Khurasan was accompanied by Töregene's unprecedented decision to name a woman as her highest counsellor.[35] The appointment of Fatima to this office throws light on some interesting aspects of female rule in the Mongol Empire. First, Fatima's origins underline the importance of the ladies' *ordos* in the political development of Mongol internal politics. She was captured during Chinggis Khan's expeditions in Khurasan (in the vicinity of the city of Mashhad) and was gifted to Töregene Khatun with the status of slave. A close relationship developed between the two women, which eventually led to Fatima being catapulted to a position of considerable power in the administration, since, as Rashid al-Din mentions, she became 'the confidant of the *Khātūn* and the repository of her secrets'.[36] Second, Fatima's appointment highlights the notion of female rule among these nomads as something that could not only be achieved by marriage but also through inter-female relationships, without

any apparent intervention by a male member of the family. In fact, Juvayni claims that Töregene placed most of her political authority in Fatima, who was in charge of removing the previous amirs and governors and carrying out the transformation of the administration.[37]

The nomination of Fatima as high counsellor caused fierce opposition among members of the royal family. Yet, the discord does not seem to be rooted in an opposition towards the women's rule *per se* but rather towards their political agenda. Among contemporary and later sources, both women (Töregene and Fatima) are described as being competent, shrewd and capable in the affairs of state.[38] The rebellions against them are described without any particular emphasis being placed on the fact that they were women, and it seems that the royal family's discontent arose because of the political measures adopted by Fatima (namely, the removal of the amirs) or because of the succession procedures in the Great Khanate (Otchigin's rebellion).[39] The conspiracy of the deposed amirs and the return of Güyük to Mongolia from the western front mark the end of this period of female rule in the Mongol Empire. Fatima was accused of sorcery for causing the death of Köten (the protector of the deposed amirs) and was cruelly executed: 'Her upper and lower orifices were filled; she was wrapped in a carpet and thrown into the water'.[40] For some historians of the period, the accusation of sorcery was nothing more than a political move by the ousted amirs to remove Fatima from office and regain their role in the administration. Simultaneously, it provided Güyük with an opportunity to distance himself from his mother and Fatima's policies, which may have helped to appeal for support from some rebel members of the royal family. Töregene tried to avoid handing over Fatima for trial, but her fate was sealed and, 'when the inquisitors were investigating Fatima Khatun, they kept her hungry and naked for a while, threatening her with violence until the poor woman admitted to and paid the price for acts she had not committed'.[41]

The regency of Töregene Khatun has not been seen as an important period in the history of the empire and is generally overlooked by historians. However, this *khātūn* succeeded through her skill in the art of diplomacy to secure her position of power for a period of six years. Furthermore, she managed to resist the attempts of members of the royal family to seize power. She carried out important political reforms in an attempt to break the dependence on administrators rooted in Chinese imperial tradition such as Yelü Chucai by reinstating the Khwarazmian ᶜAbd al-Rahman.[42] This has been seen as a struggle between two different conceptions of empire based on the taxation of agricultural lands. On the one hand, reforms in an attempt to break the dependence on her husband's administrators such as Yelü Chucai – of Khitan origin – proposed light taxation of

the sedentary population and respect for the property of the landowners of Northern China. This approach was mostly backed by the Toluid branch of the royal family, which had extensive appanages in the region. On the other hand, an approach based on high taxation of the sedentary population was represented by ᶜAbd al-Rahman during the later years of Ögetei Khan. Töregene's reinstatement of ᶜAbd al-Rahman and the appointment of Fatima should be seen in this context, together with the strategy to gain Chaghatai's support by exploiting his enmity with Mahmud Yalavach. The opposition and hostility that her reign provoked seems, in both the Chinese and Persian sources, to have been based on her commitment to her model of empire and a clear agenda for political reform, rather than on the fact that she was a woman.[43] Töregene died in 1246, but not before she had exercised her authority to secure the enthronement of her son Güyük Khan (r. 1246–8), whom she favoured and 'most of the emirs were in agreement with her'.[44] She died, but the institution of female regency in the empire had been established and it would remain a succession option for as long as the Mongols stayed united under the control of a globally recognised Great Khan.

Women as Protagonists of Dynastic Change: Female Involvement in the Toluid Coup d'État

The Toluid-orientated sources like to emphasise the role of Sorghaghtani Beki (d. 1252) as that of not only a very influential woman but as Töregene's alter ego.[45] Although she never acquired nominal recognition as empress, Sorghaghtani Beki is portrayed in the same sources as the defender of a model of empire based on light taxation of the sedentary population.[46] She is regarded as the protector of a line of succession from Chinggis Khan that the Ögeteids had broken when Töregene took control of the realm and championed her son Güyük as ruler of the Mongols to the detriment of Shiremün.[47] However, this idyllic representation of Sorghaghtani in the sources cannot be taken literally. Rather than simply being a champion of the right causes, this formidable woman was doing the same thing as Töregene, that is exercising her political will in pursuit of her own – and her dependants' – interests. She was the daughter of Jagambo, the brother of the Kerait ruler in the early years of Chinggis Khan.[48] The alliance between Chinggis Khan and the Ong Khan of the Keraits against the Merkits was sealed and consolidated by a marriage between the eldest (Jochi) and youngest (Tolui) sons of Chinggis Khan and two of the Kerait ruler's nieces (Bek-Tutmish and Sorghaghtani Beki respectively).[49] Little is known about the relationship between

Sorghaghtani Beki and her husband but Tolui was one of the most active generals of the Mongol army and spent most of his adult life on campaign, leaving Sorghaghtani in charge of the education of their sons and having himself little or no influence over his offspring.[50]

Sorghaghtani Beki achieved exceptionally high status across the empire. Most of the available sources, both Christian and Muslim, agree on the amount of power and influence she wielded.[51] The *Tartar Relation*, a Western source written by an Eastern European cleric who met Piano de Carpini on his return to Europe from Mongolia, states that she was 'next in precedence among the Tartars to the Emperor's mother [Töregene]'.[52] The same text gives us another indication of the status of the *khātūn* when the author cannot recall the name of Tolui but clearly acknowledges the influence exercised by Sorghaghtani Beki.[53] Her position in the family structure of the Mongols was established by her marriage to a son of Chinggis Khan, but also, when Tolui had died in 1233, she received his dependent territories (*ulus*) and *ordo*, which represented people and territories in Mongolia and Northern China.[54] The revenues and support inherited from her husband allowed her to oppose Ögetei when he tried to arrange a marriage between her and his son Güyük. Sorghaghtani preferred to remain unmarried and sent a message of rejection to the Khan in the following terms:

> How is it possible to alter the terms of the *yarligh* [royal decree]? and yet my thought is only to bring up these children until they reach the stage of manhood and independence, and to try to make them well mannered and not liable to go apart and hate each other so that, perhaps, some great thing may come of their unity.[55]

This statement is interesting for two reasons. First, it illustrates that Sorghaghtani was strong enough to oppose the wishes of the Great Khan, benefiting from her kinship and marriage connections. And, second, it could be interpreted as an intelligent long-term political strategy, since remaining single left her free to develop a diplomatic network, which in the end promoted her son Möngke to the khanate. During the reign of Töregene Khatun, Sorghaghtani had kept a low profile and begun to 'cultivate the goodwill of the nobles through gifts and beneficence'.[56] Muslim sources also regard her as highly influential; Khwandamir even affirms that the election of Güyük Khan was decided by Töregene Khatun and Sorghaghtani, with whom all the other amirs and officials agreed.[57] She showed great diplomatic skills by maintaining good relations with the Ögeteids whilst gaining the support of Batu Khan, the eldest living member of the Chinggisid family. She waited for the right moment to

exploit the enmity between Batu and Güyük when in 1247 the latter moved westward with an army to apparently attack Batu in Russia.[58] When this news reached Sorghaghtani, she sent a message to Batu saying, 'be prepared, for Güyük Khan has set out for those regions at the head of a large army … Batu was grateful and made ready for battle with him',[59] but the battle never occurred. When Güyük's expedition arrived in Samarqand, he died and a new dynastic struggle started in the empire.[60]

Since, strictly speaking, Sorghaghtani never acquired nominal recognition as an empress or regent of the empire, the next woman to occupy the role of regent in the empire was the wife of Güyük Khan, Oghul Qaimish (r. 1248–50).[61] Once again, with the death of a Great Khan in 1248, the Mongols had to deal with a succession crisis and, as was the case when Ögetei died, a woman had to deal with the internal conflict between the various parts of the Chinggisid family. In this case, the diplomatic strategies carried out by Sorghaghtani had brought the Toluids onto the political map and, thanks to the fruitful relationship cultivated by Tolui's wife with Batu, this branch of Chinggis Khan's descendants became key political actors in the development of the empire. The alliance created by Sorghaghtani precipitated the confrontation between, on the one hand, the Toluids and the Jochids and, on the other, the Ögeteids and Chaghataids.[62]

If we trust Rashid al-Din's account, Oghul Qaimish's appointment is presented as the consequence of a 'tradition' among the Mongols of making a woman regent of the empire after the death of the khan. He mentions that Batu suggested that 'Oghul-Qaimish continue, as heretofore, to administer affairs in consultation with Chinqai and the [other] ministers, and let her neglect nothing, for on account of old age, weakness, and gout I am unable to move, and you, the *inis* [junior Mongol Princes], are all there'.[63] However, the only precedent is Töregene Khatun, and consequently this 'tradition' mentioned by Rashid al-Din should therefore be understood not as a 'Mongol tradition' but rather as a 'nomadic' tradition stretching back to the time of the Qarakhitai. Besides, while Töregene had enjoyed both nominal and real power in state affairs, the new female head of the empire only gained nominal recognition, whilst the real power in the empire lay in the hands of Sorghaghtani Beki.[64] Sources are unclear about the political moves taken by Oghul Qaimish. Some suggest that she tried to counteract the diplomatic network built up by Sorghaghtani by appointing Ögetei's grandson Shiremün as candidate to the throne, but the possibility of supporting one of her own sons can not be ruled out.[65] The Toluids proposed to elect the new khan within Batu's homeland and to have a *quriltai* in Central Asia, going against the Mongol custom of holding the elective assembly in Mongolia. The Ögeteids boycotted the

meeting for a while, but Sorghaghtani's perseverance influenced Batu's final decision, who, according to Rashid al-Din said: 'Set him [Möngke Khan] on the throne. Whoever turns against the *yasa* [code of Chinggis Khan], let him lose his head'.[66]

Despite the weak position in which Oghul Qaimish found herself after the death of her husband, she issued commands so that 'roads were closed and a *yasa[q]* was issued to the effect that everyone should halt in whatever place he had reached, whether it was inhabited or desert. And at Oghul-Qaimish's command, Güyük Khan's tomb was transferred to the Emil, where his *ordo* was'.[67] It seems that Sorghaghtani recognised her rule and even sent 'words of advice and consolation and sent her clothing and a *boqtaq*'.[68] The two years of Oghul Qaimish's reign are difficult to assess because the sources are either fiercely critical of her rule or fail to mention her entirely.[69] Among those who did dedicate part of their chronicles to the period, Rashid al-Din mostly followed Juvayni's account, by describing her reign as one in which 'little was done, however, except for dealings with merchants. Most of the time Oghul-Qaimish was closeted with the *qams* [shamans or witch-doctors], carrying out their fantasies and absurdities'.[70]

Oghul Qaimish was not alone in this succession struggle, though sometimes those who were supposed to be her closest allies propagated division and discord among the Ögeteids. It seems that her sons played an important role in the struggle for succession. Khoja and Naqu, the sons of Güyük Khan and Oghul Qaimish, are mentioned as those who entrusted Batu with the task of deciding who should be elected Great Khan, probably expecting him to choose one of them or at least their nephew Shiremün who, after all, had the support of Ögetei and was backed by the empress regent Oghul Qaimish.[71] Batu, however, decided to appoint Möngke, the son of Sorghaghtani Beki and Tolui, after he himself had been offered – and rejected – the throne.[72] At the same time, it might be argued that the role played by Sorghaghtani in alerting Batu of a possible attack by Güyük, and her now outspoken promotion of her son for the khanate, might have made the difference, leading to the appointment of Möngke – Batu's choice – to the throne.[73]

Various *quriltais* were held and divisions arose among the descendants of Chinggis Khan. Some sources suggest that there were efforts to reach an agreement and persuade the Ögeteids to accept their fate, but in the end Möngke Khan was elected and the Toluids carried out a bloody purge of their opponents.[74] The descendants of Ögetei tried to put their differences aside and resist the Toluid usurpation, but it was too late and the Toluid coup supported by the Jochids suffocated the Ögeteids and

those Chaghataids who had allied themselves with them in their appanages in Central Asia and Eastern Turkestan.[75] As for Oghul Qaimish, she was sent together with Qadaqash Khatun (Shiremün's mother) to Sorghaghtani Beki's *ordo*, where they were both cruelly executed.[76] Thus, Oghul Qaimish's reign seems to have had repercussions – albeit negative ones – on the Mongol nobility and it marks the end of an era in the history of the Mongol Empire. William of Rubruck comments on the impact she had when describing an encounter with the new Mongol ruler: 'Mangu (Möngke) told me with his own lips that Chamus [Oghul Qaimish] was the worst kind of witch and that by her sorcery she had destroyed her whole family'.[77]

After Oghul Qaimish's death and the coronation of Möngke Khan (r. 1251–9), the empire entered a new period in which the Great Khanate was in the hands of the Toluids. The idea of a united Mongol Empire would not survive Möngke Khan himself, and its division into territorial units in China, Central Asia, Russia and Iran would trigger constant disputes and conflicts over territory and influence.[78] From 1251 the Mongol empire became divided into two main spheres of influence controlled by the Jochid and Toluid branches of Chinggis Khan's descendants. A Great Khan would remain in China until the fourteenth century with the proclamation of Qubilai Khan (r. 1260–94), but the Toluid approach to the institution of female regency would be very different from that of their Ögeteid predecessors. While the Ögeteids held on to their appanages in the eastern regions of Central Asia and Mongolia, the Toluids progressively shifted the empire's centre of gravity to the south, into more sedentarised Chinese territories.[79] Though the sources do not reflect any particular disdain for the gender of the empresses of the 1240s, a woman would never again be in charge of the entire empire. Yet, this nomadic institution, derived from the Qarakhitaids, would be maintained, discarded or transformed in the newly established khanates.

The Continuation of a Nomadic Tradition in Central Asia: Orghina Khatun and the Rule of the Chaghataid Khanate

The Chaghataid *ulus*, which included the territories in West Turkestan, had fiscal control over the rich Fergana Valley and was ruled by a woman called Orghina Khatun (r. 1251–60) for almost a decade after the accession of Möngke Khan.[80] According to Rashid al-Din, she was the daughter of Töralchi, one of the sons of Qutuqa Beki, the ruler of the Oyrat people in the time of Chinggis Khan and Chächäyigän Khatum, a daughter of Chinggis Khan.[81] She moved to Central Asia when she married Qara-

Hülegü, grandson of Chaghatai by his son Mö'etüken (d. 1221) and the named heir of the realm during Chaghatai's lifetime.[82] She certainly enjoyed a high status by being a granddaughter of Chinggis Khan and was well connected to members of the Tuluid branch of the Mongol royal family. Actually, she was a half-sister to Öljei Khatun and sister of Güyük Khatun, who were wives of Hülegü Ilkhan.[83] Furthermore, she became the niece of Möngke Khan when he married Orghina's aunt Oghul Qoymish, a daughter of Qutuqa Beki.[84] We only have scant information about Orghina Khatun's life prior to her accession to the throne.[85] However, she played an important role in the turmoil that shook the Chaghatai *ulus* after Chaghatai's death in 1244 and the subsequent struggles for the Great Khanate during the rules of Töregene, Güyük Khan and Oghul Qaimish.

Allegedly, Orghina Khatun was held in high esteem by the founder of the *ulus* (Chaghatai), by whom she was 'loved very much and called *Orghina Bäri* (*bäri* meaning daughter-in-law)'.[86] When Chaghatai passed away, her husband became ruler of his grandfather's territories and maintained this position during Töregene's regency. Once on the throne, Güyük Khan decided to replace Qara-Hülegü with his friend and fellow drinker Yesü Möngke (son of Chaghatai).[87] Apart from friendship, Rashid al-Din gives another reason for explaining Qara-Hülegü's replacement and suggests that it was enmity between Yesü Möngke and Möngke Khan that precipitated the displacement of Orghina's husband from the throne.[88] Without denying the rivalry between these two princes, Rashid al-Din's explanation seems to me to be somewhat counterfactual and at odds with the political context of the period. Qara-Hülegü's removal appears to accord with the struggle occasioned by the two different conceptions of imperial rule personified by Sorghaghtani and Töregene. Fatima Khatun's policy of replacing amirs such as Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai, Mahmud Yalavach, Masᶜud Beg and Körgüz, as mentioned above, had the support of Qara-Hülegü and Orghina Khatun.[89] In fact, they are credited with having been in charge of dispatching Qur-Buqa and Arghun Aqa to Khurasan to capture, kill and replace Körgüz.[90] Bearing this in mind, the removal of Qara-Hülegü was not simply a question of affinity, but can also be seen as a measure taken by Güyük to give an image of an independent ruler making decisions of his own after the death of his mother Töregene. Similarly, the replacement could, at least in part, have been a way in which Güyük could seek to bring some internal peace after the succession, following the upheavals that had occurred under his mother's reign, and search for a stability of political balance within the royal family. In sum, Yesü Möngke became the ruler of the Chaghatai *ulus* in Central Asia and a supporter of the Güyük (and Ögeteid) line of succession from 1246 until Möngke Khan's accession to the Great Khanate

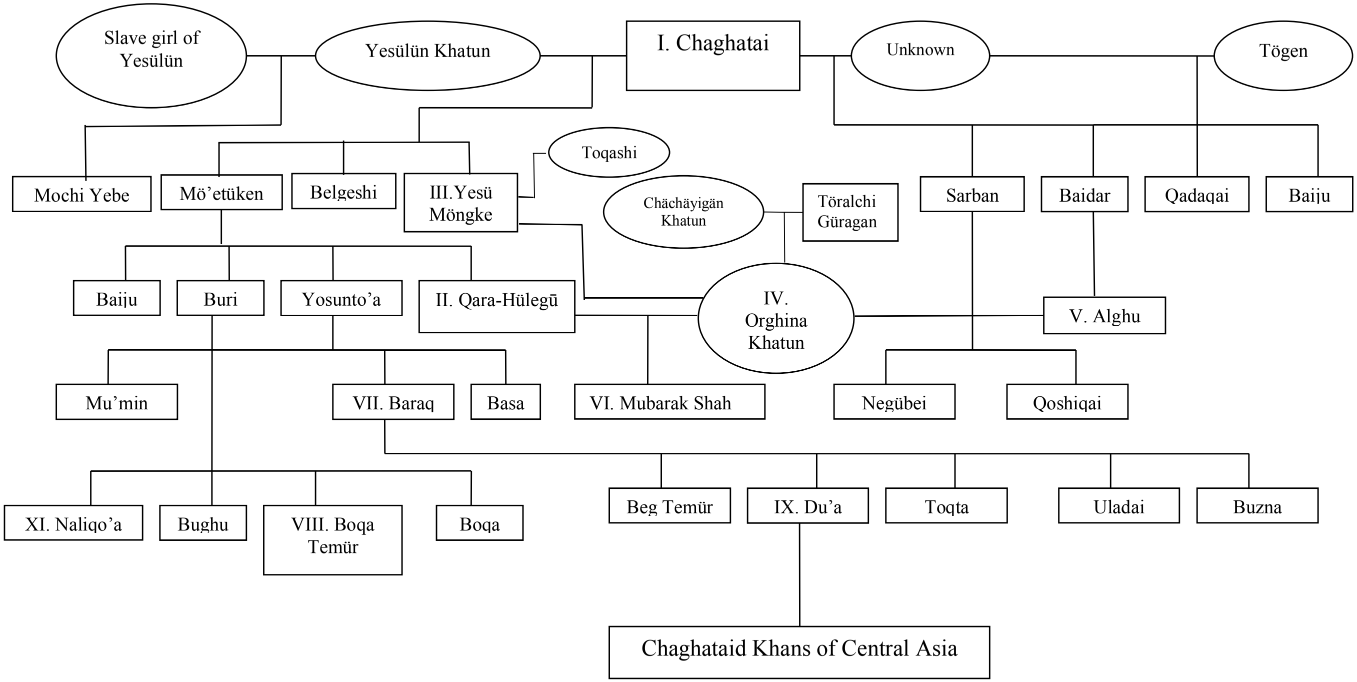


Figure 2.2 The *khātūns* of the House of Chaghatai

in 1251.[91] With these credentials and the enmity that Yesü Möngke supposedly felt towards Möngke Khan, it is not surprising that 'when Möngke Qa'an became Qa'an, he gave Qara-Hülegü a *yarligh* commanding him to put Yesü-Möngke to death and, as heir-apparent, become the ruler of that *ulus*'.[92]

We do not know much about Orghina's actions in this period. Rashid al-Din is unclear whether she accompanied her husband when he was replaced by Yesü Möngke or if she remained in Central Asia while her husband went into forced exile.[93] However, Qara-Hülegü died on his way back to Central Asia with Möngke's orders to put his uncle to death, and, consequently, it was Orghina Khatun who had to step in and 'put Yesu-Möngke to death in accordance with the *yarligh* and ruled herself in her husband's stead'.[94] With Qara-Hülegü's death in 1252, the Chaghataid Khanate was once more without a head. Orghina Khatun assumed control of the realm in the name of her son, Mubarak Shah (r. 1266), in accordance with Möngke Khan's command.[95] Consequently, the institution of female regency seems to have remained strong in the same area as where the Qarakhitai dynasty had once ruled and very close to the area where Töregene and Oghul Qaimish had had their appanages. This marks an interesting continuation of this practice and further reinforces the nomadic precedent of women's regency in the area.

Orghina Khatun was the regent of the Mongol khanate of Central Asia for ten years. This period is generally described as having been quiet in terms of political turmoil and we have no reports of upheavals in the region for most of her years in command. Certain hints suggest that during these years she was fully recognised as the ruler of the region. Some sources mention that at the time that Hülegü started his campaign to the west and his armies 'arrived in the vicinity of Almaliq,[96] Orghīna Khātūn came out to greet them as the ruler of Chaghataid territories and hosted a round of banquets, presenting them with suitable gifts'.[97] An interesting detail can be found in Rashid al-Din's account, which mentions that the chief wives of Hülegü were travelling with him. One of them was Orghina's half-sister Öljei Khatun, the mother of Möngke Temür.[98] The reception laid on by Orghina for the convoy was certainly a sign of her role as ruler of the Chaghataid Khanate, but also her family connections to the wives of Hülegü might have given an extra reason to hold the event.[99]

Some controversy has also been drawn from a passing reference made by the Christian friar William of Rubruck during his travels to meet the Great Khan Möngke in the 1250s. He states that, while travelling in Central Asia,

> we came across one large town there called Cailac in which there was a market, and many merchants flocked thither. We rested in this town for twelve days while awaiting one of Baatu's scribes who was to assist the leader of our party in the business to be settled at Mangu's [Möngke] court. That country used to be called Organum and used to have its own language and script but now it has all been seized by the Turcomans. Also the Nestorians of those parts used to perform their services and write books in that script and language; and it may be that they get their name Organa from the fact that they used to be very fine musicians or organists; so I was told.[100]

The city of 'Cailac' was known as 'Quayaligh' or 'Kayalig' and seems to correspond to the modern town of Qapal in Eastern Kazakhstan. What is interesting about this story is that the toponym of the area where Rubruck was staying bears striking similarities to the name Orghina Khatun, who was the ruler of this territory at the same time that the friar was in the area. There is disagreement among scholars on the question of whether 'Organa' refers to the regent of the Chaghataid Khanate. One of the modern translators of Rubruck's work, Christopher Dawson, has no hesitation in connecting the two words and suggests that the word 'Organum' is a clear reference to Orghina Khatun.[101] However, other translators of the work disagree with Dawson. For example, Peter Jackson claims that the origin of the term is a corruption of the word 'Urgench', the name of the capital of the Khwarazmshah Empire, while William W. Rockhill reads this as a reference to the Uyghur people who lived near the city of Kuldja in Eastern China.[102] In fact, Rubruck himself expressed doubts about the origin of the term (and was not entirely sure about his own attribution of the name to the skills of musicians) and, consequently, the issue might still be open to discussion. Having said that, if the word Organun did only refer to musicians, or to the city of Urgench or the land of the Uyghurs, its similarity in terminology with Orghina's name would be a remarkable historical coincidence.

Before going into more depth on Orghina's reign, a brief mention should be made of a contemporary female regency. During Möngke's reign, there was an internal dispute over the succession of the Golden Horde khanate in Russia. When Batu died, the Great Khan Möngke issue a decree for his chief wife Boraqchin Khatun[103] to be in command of the *ulus* on behalf of her protégé Ulaghchi, son of Sartaq son of Batu who had died shortly after being received by Möngke in Mongolia.[104] Her reign appears to have been short and only lasted for a year between 1255 and 1256, when Ulaghchi died and Batu's brother Berke removed her from the throne. Her short time in office, though, has generated some debate due to mention in the Arabic sources of an embassy sent from her to Hülegü inviting him to come to the Golden Horde and take control of the

ulus.[105] However, this claim has been dismissed by Paul Pelliot, arguing that there are serious problems with the chronology of the events narrated in the Mamluk sources.[106] For our purposes, nonetheless, it is interesting to note that the regencies of Orghina in Central Asia and Boraqchin in Russia were contemporaneous and both granted directly by Möngke Khan himself. At this point in the history of the Mongol Empire, it appears that, from the point of view of the Great Khanate, female rule was considered a common practice and was implemented simultaneously in both the Chaghataid and Jochid *uluses*.

Back in Central Asia, the events which occurred during the later years of the 1250s reveal the importance of the position acquired by Orghina Khatun within the institution of regency in the Mongol Empire. Möngke Khan died in 1259 and, without Sorghaghtani Beki as an indisputable depositary of authority, the hitherto well-assembled line of the Toluids faced a succession struggle similar to the one they had helped create for the Ögeteids in the early 1250s. In this case, the aspirants were Qubilai and Ariq Böke, respectively second and fourth sons of Tolui and Sorghaghtani Beki. Qubilai based his strength on the armies given by Möngke to continue the war in central and southern China and on his mother's appanages in the north of that country, while Ariq Böke had the support of the territories of his forefathers in Mongolia. The conflict reshaped once more the alliances between the different branches of Chinggis Khan's family.[107] If Möngke's accession had allied the Jochids with the Toluids and provoked the decline of the Ögeteids and part of the Chaghataids, now the Jochids allied with Ariq Böke, while Qubilai gained the support of the new political entity of Hülegü in Iran.[108] In this political scenario, the support of Orghina Khatun's territory became critically important for both Qubilai and Ariq Böke.

According to Rashid al-Din, Qubilai sent Abishqa (grandson of Chaghatai) to marry Orghina Khatun and rule Central Asia in support of his aspirations to the throne. However, Abishqa was intercepted on the way and killed by Ariq Böke's supporters.[109] At this early stage in the conflict, Orghina Khatun is credited with not taking a direct part in the conflict between the brothers. However, after they had both proclaimed themselves as Great Khan, Ariq Böke too tried to secure Chaghataid support for his cause and gave to Alghu, another grandson of Chaghatai, control over the Chaghataid Khanate in order to organise the dispatch of supplies from Central Asia to the troops fighting in the struggle against his brother. Orghina, in her position as ruler of the Central Asian territories, decided to go to Ariq Böke's *ordo,* where she complained about her removal, vindicated her right to rule and stayed for a time with the youngest son of Sorghaghtani Beki.[110] Meanwhile, Alghu betrayed his

patron and decided to keep the supplies he was ordered to collect for Ariq Böke, rebelled against his authority and changed sides, now giving his support to Qubilai.[111] Interestingly enough, Alghu's rebellion was not in itself enough for him to be recognised as ruler: he was only recognised as the legitimate ruler of the Chaghataid Khanate when he then married Orghina Khatun, who allowed him, according to Rashid al-Din, to secure 'absolute possession of the throne of the *ulus* of Chaghatai'.[112]

Qubilai triumphed in the succession struggle and was proclaimed Great Khan in 1264. He confirmed Alghu and Orghina as rulers of the Chaghataid *ulus*, but Alghu passed away in 1265–6.[113] Orghina Khatun now made her last royal decision: 'in agreement with the emirs and viziers' she elevated her son Mubarak Shah to the throne of the Chaghataid Khanate.[114] There is no further information about her in the sources after the coronation of her son, which suggest that she possibly died shortly afterwards (c. 1266).[115] During more than fifteen years of female rule in Central Asia, she had emerged successfully from two civil wars by playing her cards wisely, in favour of the Toluids first and then supporting Qubilai later. She had effectively ruled Central Asia peacefully for nine years, during which period she was recognised as the supreme authority of the realm. She was portrayed as the depositary of legitimacy in the region as proven by the fact that Alghu, although a direct descendant of Chaghatai, needed to marry her to be fully recognised as ruler of the *ulus*. Even though this union could have undermined her political authority, rather it seems that the opposite occurred, for she succeeded in gathering the support she needed to promote her son to the throne, which indicates that right up to her death she remained a fundamental political figure in Central Asia.

Notes

1. D. O. Morgan, 'The Decline and Fall of the Mongol Empire', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 19:4 (2009), p. 3.
2. F. Hodous, 'The Quriltai as a Legal Institution in the Mongol Empire', *Central Asiatic Journal* 56:12/13 (2012–13), pp. 87–102.
3. ᶜAlaᵓ al-Din ᶜAta Malik Juvayni, *Tārīkh-i jahān-gushā*, ed. M. Qazvini, 3 vols (Leiden and London, 1912–37) (hereafter, *TJG*), I, p. 143/Juvayni, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, trans. J. A. Boyle, 2 vols (Manchester, 1958; reprint 1997 with foreword by D. O. Morgan) (hereafter, Boyle), I, p. 182; Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Jāmiᶜ al-tawārīkh*, ed. M. Rawshan and M. Mūsavī, 4 vols (Tehran, 1373/1994) (hereafter, *JT*), I, pp. 618–19/Rashid al-Din Tabib, *The Successors of Genghis Khan,* trans. J. A. Boyle (New York and London, 1971) (hereafter, *Successors*), p. 18.

4. On the *quriltai* or assembly of nobles in charge of the election of the new khan, see Chapter 3.
5. See Minhaj Siraj Juzjani, *'Tabaḳāt-i Nāṣirī': A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia, Including Hindustan, from A.H. 194 (810 A.D.), to A.H. 658 (1260 A.D.) and the Irruption of the Infidel Mughals into Islam*, trans. H. G. Raverty (London, 1881) (hereafter, Raverty), p. 1105, fn. 5. Also quoted by D. A. Dunlop, 'Keraits of Eastern Asia', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 11:2 (1944), p. 284.
6. 'Börte must have been born in 1161 … The year of her death is not known, but she must have died after 1206/7 and almost certainly before her husband. … She is only briefly mentioned among the imperial consorts in YS 2 114, 2869.' See de Rachewiltz's comments in *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. I. de Rachewiltz, 2 vols (Leiden and Boston, 2004) (hereafter, *SH*), I, pp. 333–4.
7. *JT*, II, pp. 787–8/*Successors*, p. 166.
8. For a traditional view on ultimogeniture, see J. Fletcher, 'The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46:1 (1986), p. 26; Ratchnevsky, *Chinggis Khan*, p. 125; V. A. Riasanovsky, *Customary Law of the Mongol Tribes, Mongols, Buriats, Kalmucks: Parts I–III* (Harbin, 1929), pp. 77–8; H. F. Schurmann, 'Mongolian Tributary Practices of the Thirteenth Century', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 19:3/4 (1956), p. 316, fn. 4; L. Krader, 'Principles and Structures in the Organization of the Asiatic Steppe-Pastoralists', *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 11:2 (Summer, 1955), p. 72. It seems likely to me that Rashid al-Din's emphasis on this principle as a 'traditional' Mongol practice is a political strategy to justify the legitimacy of the Toluids ruling. In fact, in Rashid's own description of the ancient Mongol and Turkish tribes, leaders tended to name their eldest sons as heirs to the throne. See *JT*, I, p. 56/*Jamiᶜu't-tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*, ed. S. S. Kuru and trans. W. M. Thackston, 3 vols (Boston, 1998) (hereafter, Thackston), p. 32.
9. P. Kahn, 'Instruction and Entertainment in the Naiman Battle Text: An Analysis of §189 through §196 of *The Secret History of the Mongols*', in M. and W. Sclepp Gervers (eds), *Cultural Contacts: History and Ethnicity in Inner Asia* (Toronto, 1996), p. 100.
10. *SH*, §198.
11. On the Uhaz branch of the Merkits, see P. Pelliot and L. Hambis, *Histoire des campagnes de Gengis Khan: Cheng-Wou Ts'in-Tcheng Lou* (Leiden, 1951), pp. 273–4; on the rivalry, see *SH*, §55–6, §102 and §110.
12. *JT*, I, p. 623/*Successors*, p. 19.
13. Shabankaraᵓi, *Majmaᶜ al-ansāb*, ed. H. Muhaddith (Tehran, 1363/1984), pp. 253–4.
14. *JT*, II, p. 804/*Successors*, p. 180.
15. *JT*, I, p. 734/*Successors*, p. 120; ᶜAbd Allah ibn Fazl Allah Vassaf, *Taḥrīr-i tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, ed. ᶜA. M. Ayati (Tehran, 2004) (hereafter, *TV*), p. 309;

Juvayni even justifies the decision, making a link between primogeniture and ability to rule: 'he [Güyük] was the eldest of the brothers and had had most practice in the handling of difficult matters and most experience of weal and woe'. See *TJG*, II, p. 206/Boyle, p. 251.
16. *JT*, I, p. 799/*Successors*, p. 176.
17. *JT*, I, p. 620/*Successors*, p. 19.
18. *TJG*, II, p. 196/Boyle, p. 240.
19. Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abû'l-Faraj 1225–1286*, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge, 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1976; reprint, New Jersey, 2003) (hereafter, *Chronography*), p. 410. In the Chinese sources, she is referred to by the title *ta huang-hou,* meaning 'Great Empress'; see I. de Rachewiltz, 'Some Remarks on Töregene's Edict of 1240', *Papers in Far Eastern History* 25 (1981), p. 43.
20. *TJG*, p. 196/Boyle, p. 240.
21. *JT*, I, p. 142/Thackston, p. 77.
22. *JT*, I, p. 142/Thackston, p. 77.
23. *JT*, I, p. 690/*Successors*, p. 81; *TJG*, II, p. 169/Boyle, pp. 211–12.
24. *JT*, I, p. 142/Thackston, p. 77.
25. *TJG*, II, p. 196/Boyle, p. 240.
26. Fakhr al-Din Banakati, *'Tārīkh-i Banākatī': A General History from the Earliest Times to the 14th Century A.D.*, ed. J. She^{c}ar (Tehran, 1378/2000) (hereafter, *TB*), p. 391.
27. Mas^{c}ud found refuge with Batu in the west and Körgüz was captured in Khurasan and executed in Mongolia. See H. Kim, 'A Reappraisal of Güyük Khan', in R. Amitai and M. Biran (eds), *Mongols, Turks and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World* (Leiden and Boston, 2005), pp. 326–7. For a comprehensive explanation of the disputes between Ögeteids, Chaghataids and Jochids over these amirs, see T. T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of the Grand Qan Möngke in China, Russia, and the Islamic Lands, 1251–1259* (Berkeley, 1987), pp. 100–13.
28. There is some confusion regarding Köten's mother. According to Rashid al-Din, Köten is supposed to be a son of Töregene; however, a more reliable family link seems to be indicated by some scholars who mention him as a half-brother of Güyük and, therefore, only a stepson of Töregene. See Kim, 'Reappraisal of Güyük Khan', p. 326.
29. *TJG*, II, pp. 197–8/Boyle, p. 242; *JT*, II, pp. 799–801/*Successors*, p. 177.
30. *JT*, II, p. 813/*Successors*, pp. 189–90.
31. M. Biran, 'The Mongols in Central Asia from Chinggis Khan's Invasion to the Rise of Timur: The Ogödeid and Chaghadaid Realms', in N. Di Cosmo, J. F. Allen and P. Golden (eds), *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Period* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 48.
32. *JT*, II, pp. 801–2/*Successors*, p. 178; see also *TJG*, II, p. 199/Boyle, p. 244.
33. Kim, 'Reappraisal of Güyük Khan', p. 328.
34. *TJG*, II, p. 200/Boyle, p. 244.

35. In Persian sources, her name appears as فاطمه خاتون
36. *JT*, II, p. 799/*Successors*, p. 176; *TJG*, II, p. 200/Boyle, pp. 244–5.
37. *TJG*, II, pp. 200–1/Boyle, p. 245.
38. *JT*, p. 799/*Successors*, p. 176; Ghiyath al-Din Khwandamir, *Tārīkh-i ḥabīb al-siyar*, 4 vols (Tehran, 1333/1954) (hereafter, *THS*), III, p. 55/Ghiyath al-Din Khwandamir, *'Habibu's-Siyar': The Reign of the Mongol and the Turk*, trans. W. M. Thackston, vol. III (Cambridge, MA, 1994) (hereafter, Khwandamir), p. 31.
39. Regarding Otchigin's revolt, Kim suggests that the considerable number of soldiers and territories (in Manchuria and Korea) allotted him by Chinggis Khan gave Temüge the considerable military and political strength to challenge the Güyük's succession, but no specific mention is made of any opposition towards a female regent for the empire. See Kim, 'A Reappraisal of Güyük Khan', p. 328.
40. *TB*, p. 393; G. Lane, *Daily Life in the Mongol Empire* (Westport and London, 2006), p. 238.
41. *THS*, III, p. 56/Khwandamir, p. 32.
42. T. T. Allsen, 'Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', in H. Franke and D. Twitchett, *The Cambridge History of China: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907–1368* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 383–4.
43. *Yuan Shih* 2/39–40, quoted in Kim, 'A Reappraisal of Güyük Khan', p. 311; it is worth mentioning here that the only hostile reference to Töregene based on her being a woman is to be found in Juzjani's account where he says the *khātūn* 'displayed woman's way, such as proceed from deficiency of intellect and excess of sensuality'. See Minhaj Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqāt-i Nāṣīrī*, ed. ᶜA. Habibi, 2 vols (Kabul, 1342–3/1963–4) (hereafter, *TN*), II, p. 167/Raverty, p. 1144.
44. *JT*, II, p. 806/*Successors*, p. 181.
45. Sorghaghtani Beki was the wife of Tolui (fourth son of Chinggis Khan) and mother of Möngke Khan (r. 1251–9), Qubilai Khan (r. 1260–94), Hülegü Ilkhan (r. 1260–5) and Ariq Böke. She is referred to as belonging to the Kerait people and professing the Christian faith. See *JT*, II, p. 823/*Successors*, p. 200.
46. M. Rossabi, 'Khubilai Khan and the Women in his Family', in W. Bauer (ed.), *Studia Sino-Mongolica: Festschrift Fur Herbert Franke* (Wiesbaden, 1979), p. 164.
47. She is portrayed by Rashid al-Din as being the person who influenced Batu to put forward Möngke as successor in 1251. See *JT*, I, p. 725/*Successors*, p.121.
48. Jagambo or Jakambu is the title given to the father of Sorghaghtani Beki when, after being defeated by Chinggis Khan, he fled and found refuge with the Tangut. See Dunlop, 'Keraits of Eastern Asia', p. 283, fn. 6.
49. *JT*, II, p. 962/Thackston, p. 471. On the intermarriages between Chinggisids and Kerait women, see Figure 4.1. in Chapter 4.

50. M. Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 12. See also B. De Nicola, 'The Role of the Domestic Sphere in the Islamisation of the Mongols', in A. Peacock (ed.), *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History* (Edinburgh, forthcoming).
51. Although she never occupied a royal position in her lifetime, she was posthumously named Empress of Mongol China. See *Yuan Shih*, 38:13a (3:826) quoted in D. M. Farquhar, *The Government of China under Mongol Rule: A Reference Guide* (Stuttgart, 1990), p. 233, fn. 198.
52. R. A. Skelton *et al.*, *The Vinland Map and the Tartar Relation* (New Haven and London, 1965), p. 76.
53. Skelton *et al.*, *The Vinland Map*, p. 76.
54. *JT*, II, p. 822/*Successors*, p. 199. See also I. de Rachewiltz, Hok-lam Chan and W. May (eds), *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200–1300)* (Wiesbaden, 1993), p. 481.
55. *JT*, II, p. 792/*Successors*, p. 169.
56. *THS*, III, p. 58/Khwandamir, p. 33. See also *Chronography*, p. 417.
57. *THS*, III, p. 55/Khwandamir, p. 32.
58. See P. Pelliot, *Les Mongols et la Papauté*, Revue de l'Orient chrétien, vol. III (1931), p. 195. On the early relationship between Batu and Güyük, see Kim, 'Reappraisal of Güyük Khan', pp. 314–30.
59. *JT*, II, p. 809/*Successors*, p. 185. On Güyük's campaign west, see Kim, 'Reappraisal of Güyük Khan', pp. 328–32.
60. The date of Güyük's death is missing from Rashid al-Din, but Chinese sources mention that he died in the third month (27 March–24 April) of 1248. See Pelliot, *Les Mongols et la Papauté*, III, pp. 195–6, who suggests that Güyük died in Qum Sengir in Eastern Turkestan.
61. On the differentiation between nominal and real power among Mongol women in medieval times, see section 2 in B. De Nicola, 'Mongol Khātuns and the Process of Sedentarization', master's dissertation (SOAS, University of London, 2006).
62. T. T. Allsen, 'The Princes of the Left Hand: An Introduction to the History of the Ulus of Orda in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries', *Archivum Eurasiae medii aevi* 5 (1985–7), p. 15.
63. *JT*, p. 810/*Successors*, pp. 185–6.
64. Oghul Qaimish received Batu's blessing, probably having it in mind that she would not last long, see *TJG*, II, p. 217/Boyle, p. 262.
65. Rossabi, 'Khubilai Khan', p. 165.
66. *JT*, II, p. 828/*Successors*, p. 204.
67. *TJG*, II, p, 217/Boyle, p. 262; *JT*, II, p. 810/*Successors*, p. 185.
68. *TJG*, II, p. 217/Boyle, p. 262; *JT*, II, p. 810/*Successors*, p. 185. The *boqtaq* was the hat used by wealthy Mongol women as a sign of royalty in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This headdress was still used by Mongol women in the Timurid court in the fifteenth century. See S. Cammann, 'Mongol Costume: Historical and Recent', in D. Sinor (ed.), *Aspects of*

Altaic Civilization (Bloomington, 1963), pp. 161–2. For this item of clothing among the Timurid *khātūns*, see Ruy González de Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403–1406*, trans. G. le Strange (London, 2005), pp. 258–9. William of Rubruck also mentions the use of these hats by the *khātūns*, see C. Dawson, *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London and New York, 1955), p. 102.

69. In his account of the period, Khwandamir does not mention Oghul Qaimish at any point, placing all the responsibility for the Ögeteids in the hands of Güyük's sons Khoja and Naqu. See *THS*, III, pp. 58–61/Khwandamir, pp. 33–5.
70. *TJG*, II, p. 219/Boyle, p. 265; *JT*, II, p. 810/*Successors*, p. 186.
71. There appears to have been disagreement among the descendants of Güyük over who had the right to rule. Oghul Qaimish, Khoja and Naqu seem to have created parallel courts, which generated confusion among the Ögeteid followers. See *JT*, II, p. 810/*Successors*, p. 186; *TJG*, II, p. 219/Boyle, p. 265. On the other hand, Juzjani does not mention the regency of Oghul Qaimish in his account, only the name of Möngke as Batu's choice to rule. See *TN*, II, pp. 178–80/Raverty, pp. 1176–87.
72. On the role played by Batu in the enthronement of Möngke, see Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, pp. 21–30.
73. *Chronography*, p. 417.
74. *TJG*, III, pp. 23–4/Boyle, p. 563. It is interesting to note that Juvayni mentions the presence of the sons of Temüge Otchegin, Köten and Kölgen in the *quraltai* that proclaimed Möngke as Great Khan. Those who rebelled against Töregene Khatun in the early 1240s were now on the side of the Toluids. See *TJG*, III, p. 31/Boyle, p. 568. See also *JT*, II, p. 839/*Successors*, p. 215.
75. *TJG*, II, pp. 219–20; III, p. 28–9/Boyle, pp. 265, 566.
76. *TJG*, III, p. 59/Boyle, p. 588; *TV*, p. 312; *JT*, II, p. 839/*Successors*, p. 215.
77. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 203.
78. On the division of the Mongol Empire, see P. Jackson, 'The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire', *Central Asiatic Journal* 22 (1978), pp. 186–244.
79. The appanage of Oghul Qaimish and Güyük Khan was in the region of Dsungaria or Dzungaria in the northern part of today's Xinjiang in China. See E. Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources*, 2 vols (London, 1910), I, pp. 160–1. On Qubilai, see Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan*, p. 131.
80. The name can also take the forms Orghana and Orqina among others. In the Persian sources, she is referred to as اورغَنه خاتون in *JT*, p. 801. Vassaf uses the name هرغنه in *TV*, p. 335. In Juwayni, her name is spelled اورقينه خاتون, *TJG*, III, p. 97. Here I refer to her as Orghina. An extended version of this section has been published in B. De Nicola, 'The Queen of the Chaghatayids: Orghīna Khātūn and the rule of Central Asia', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26:1–2 (2016), pp. 107–20.

81. In *JT*, p. 100, the name appears as تورالچی.
82. *JT*, I, p. 752/*Successors*, p. 138.
83. Like in the case of Orghina, the mother of Güyük Khatun was Chächäyigän Khatun, daughter of Chinggis Khan himself by his chief wife Börte; see *SH*, §239. She is also mentioned by Vassaf as having a sister who was married to Batu, though her name is not given. See *TV*, p. 13. On her and her offspring, see A. F. Broadbridge, 'Marriage, Family and Politics: The Ilkhanid-Oirat Connection' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26:1–2 (2016), pp. 123–9.
84. *JT*, I, p. 100/Thackston, p. 55.
85. On the Chaghataid family, see Figure 2.2.
86. *JT*, I, p. 100/Thackston, p. 56.
87. Biran, 'The Mongols in Central Asia', p. 48.
88. *JT*, I, p. 760/*Successors*, p. 143. Vassaf mentions the replacement without giving particular reasons for it; *TV*, p. 335.
89. See *JT*, II, p. 801/*Successors*, p. 177. Also Raverty, p. 1149, fn. 7. In Juvayni's account, it is Töregene who sends Arghun Aqa to Khurasan to replace Körgüz. See *TJG*, II, p. 274/Boyle, p. 538.
90. On Arghun Aqa's accession to office, see G. Lane, 'Arghun Aqa: Mongol Bureaucrat', *Iranian Studies* 32:4 (1999), pp. 459–62.
91. *TJG*, I, p. 220/Boyle, p. 265.
92. *JT*, I, p. 767/*Successors*, p. 149; *TV*, p. 335. Chinese sources also mention her appointment to the regency; see *Yuan Shih* 134/3247–9 quoted in M. Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of an Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* (Richmond, 1997), p. 16, fn. 92.
93. See, for example, *Successors*, p. 143.
94. *JT*, I, p. 767/*Successors*, pp. 149–50. One of Yesü Möngke's wives, called Toqashi Khatun, was brutally executed by Qara-Hülegü; see *TJG*, III, 59/Boyle, pp. 588–9. In *JT*, II, p. 839/*Successors*, p. 213, the story is also narrated but the lady is mentioned as the wife of Yesunto'a (brother of Qara-Hülegü).
95. *TJG*, I, p. 230/Boyle, p. 274.
96. She ruled from the city of Almaliq in Eastern Turkestan; see Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches*, I, p. 161, fn. 440. On the city of Almaliq, see V. V. Barthold, 'Almaligh', *EI2*.
97. *JT*, II, p. 978/Thackston, pp. 479–80. Also mentioned by *TJG*, III, p. 97/Boyle, p. 612/*TV*, p. 323.
98. Her name appears transliterated as Öljä[i] or Oljei. The Persian sources read اولجای خاتون .
99. It is worth mentioning a later source: Mustawfi takes note of the banquets offered to Hülegü in Central Asia but does not mention the presence of any women. Since Mustawfi had access to Rashid al-Din and Juwayni's accounts, it seems to me an intentional omission by Mustawfi. See L. J. Ward, '*Zafarnāmah* of Mustawfī', doctoral dissertation (Manchester University, 1983), p. 17.

100. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 137.
101. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 137, fn. 2. Rockhill also relies on Yule to link the area with the *khātūn*. See William of Rubruck, *The Journey of William of Rubruck to the Eastern Parts of the World, 1253–1255, as Narrated by Himself, with Two Accounts of the Earlier Journey of John of Pian de Carpini,* trans. W. W. Rockhill (London, 1900) (hereafter, WR2), p. 140, fn. 4, and Sir H. Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither: Being a Collection of Medieval Notices of China*, 4 vols (London, 1913–16), pp. 160–1, fn. 3.
102. WR2, p. 148, fn. 3; *The Mission of William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke 1253–1255*, trans. P. Jackson (London, 1990), p. 141, fn. 3.
103. On her name, see P. Pelliot, *Notes sur l'histoire de la Horde d'Or*, ed. L. Hambis (Paris, 1949), pp. 39–40.
104. *TJG*, I, p. 223/Boyle, p. 268. She was from the Alchi Tatar people according to Rashid al-Din; see Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Jāmi*ᶜ *al-tawārīkh*, ed. B. Karimi, 2 vols (Tehran, 1367/1988–9), I, p. 67/Thackston, p. 50.
105. See Baybars al-Mansuri, *Zubdat al-fikrah fī taʾrīkh al-hijrah*, ed. D. S. Richards (Beirut, 1998), p. 14. See also B. Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde: Die Mongolen in Russland 1223–1502* (Leipzig, 1943), p. 382.
106. Pelliot, *Notes sur l'histoire*, pp. 43–4.
107. P. Jackson, 'The Accession of Qubilai Qa'an: A Re-Examination', *Journal of the Anglo-Mongolian Society* 2:1 (1975), pp. 1–10.
108. It is not clear whether Hülegü's first choice for the Great Khanate was Qubilai at the beginning, but once the Golden Horde supported Ariq Böke, the Qubilai alternative seemed the most appropriate way to gain legitimacy for the establishment of a new khanate in Iran. See D. O. Morgan, *The Mongols* (Cambridge, MA, 1986; rev. edn 2007), p. 104.
109. The person who killed him was Asutai, one of Möngke Khan's sons; see *JT*, I, p. 754/*Successors*, pp. 138–9.
110. Probably until around 661/1262–3 according to *JT*, I, p. 768/*Successors*, p. 150.
111. *JT*, I, pp. 767–9/*Successors*, pp. 150–1.
112. *JT*, I, pp. 767–9/*Successors*, pp. 150–1. Orghina seems to have remained loyal to Qubilai during the civil war and therefore is represented as the depositary of the legitimacy of the Chaghataid Khanate.
113. Biran, *Qaidu*, p. 23. Rashid al-Din mentions his death in 662/1263–4; see *JT*, I, p. 769/*Successors*, p. 151.
114. *JT*, II, p. 885/*Successors*, pp. 260–1; V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, 4 vols (Leiden, 1956–63), I, p. 47.
115. Monique Kervran has suggested that a burial monument found in Eastern Kazakhstan might be the tomb of Orghina Khatun. See M. Kervran, 'Un monument baroque dans les steppes du Kazakhstan: le tombeau d'Örkina Khatun, Princesse Chagatay?', *Arts Asiatiques* 57 (2002), pp. 5–32.

3

Political Involvement and Women's Rule in the Ilkhanate

The arrival of Hülegü in Iran during the mid-1250s was not a simple military campaign but the migration of at least part of his entourage.[1] Women accompanied the expedition to the Middle East and settled in Iran in successive waves of migration. In this new land, they became a minority within a majority population that was not only Muslim but had been ruled solely by Muslim rulers for 600 years until the arrival of the Mongols.[2] Furthermore, the territory comprised both nomadic and sedentary populations that were integrated in a more balanced way than in Central Asia or Russia.[3] It was different from China, too, in terms of wealth, urban development and population size. The dynasty started by Hülegü (d. 1265) belonged to the line of Tolui and Sorghaghtani Beki, probably the branch of the royal family least supportive of the nomadic model of extractive production, because of its exposure to and interaction with sedentary populations in its appanages.[4] Furthermore, the division of the Mongol Empire into four khanates in the conquered territories (China, Russia, Iran and Central Asia) after 1260 propitiated different relationships between the Mongols and the native populations in each of these territories.[5]

This division also affected the development of women's rule in each of these *uluses*. In China, women occasionally assumed the position of empress regent on behalf of their sons in similar terms to the Qarakhitai and the Mongols during the united empire. In Russia and Central Asia, beyond the two examples mentioned in the previous chapter, the institution of female regency was not maintained beyond the 1250s as happened in Yuan China.[6] In particular, the Ilkhanate presents an interesting case in the evolution of the political status of Mongol women in the Mongol Empire. In her doctoral dissertation, Karin Quade-Reutter discussed the differences between the recognition of political authority and the actual political influence in the affairs of the state held by Turco-Mongol women in Ilkhanid Iran.[7] Although one is reluctant to fully commit to the Weberian framework applied to the political thought and practice of the Mongol Empire done by Quade-Reutter, her discussion on the notions of

'power' (*Macht*), 'rule' (*Herrschaft*), 'authority' (*Autorität*) and 'violence' (*Gewalt*) help to clarify what exactly we are talking about when analysing the role of women in the political life of the Ilkhanate.[8] As we will see, women in the Ilkhanate exercised 'power' in a variety of forms and their political status was not static during the period of Mongol domination of Iran. This chapter focuses on the evolution of female rule in the Ilkhanate and elucidates what happened to the political position of women in Iran once the Mongols had settled in the region. The chapter is divided into two parts based on a geographical and political division of the Ilkhanid territories. The first part examines the role of women in the central government of the Mongol dominion in Iran, while the second part concentrates on those regions that were subject to the Mongols but enjoyed degrees of autonomy and were ruled by local dynasties. This latter section focuses on the Turkic dynasties that ruled the regions of Fars, Kerman and Anatolia as subjects of the Ilkhans. This presents an interesting point of comparison for looking at the role of women in politics in the 'peripheries' of the empire vis-à-vis the power centre represented by the royal camp.

In Search of a Mongol Queen in Ilkhanid Iran

Influential women accompanied Hülegü on his campaign to the west, settling in Iran once the conquest was finished and the Ilkhanate established, not without controversy, in 1260.[9] According to Rashid al-Din, the chief wife of the newly self-proclaimed Ilkhan was Doquz Khatun, a Kerait woman whose first husband was Tolui and upon whose death she was passed to Hülegü.[10] Her second marriage seems to have been consummated just before Hülegü's departure to Iran in the early 1250s.[11] Like Sorghaghtani Beki, she was a Nestorian Christian who openly showed her Christian faith when she arrived in the Middle East, and it was this religious affiliation that attracted most of the attention of the chroniclers of the time, and, consequently, information regarding her participation in the affairs of state is limited.[12] However, some aspects of her life at court can be discovered among the available material. We know that she acquired high social status and accumulated a considerable amount of wealth in her *ordo*, which passed to other *khātūns* after her death.[13] Doquz Khatun's first marriage to Tolui conferred upon her a great deal of prestige and recognition among the royal family. Rashid al-Din explains that, 'since she [Doquz Khatun] has been his father's wife she was greater than the other wives, even though he [Hülegü] had married some of them before her'.[14] Furthermore, the Persian historian recalls an anecdote in which Möngke Khan advises his brother Hülegü prior to the latter's campaign in the west.

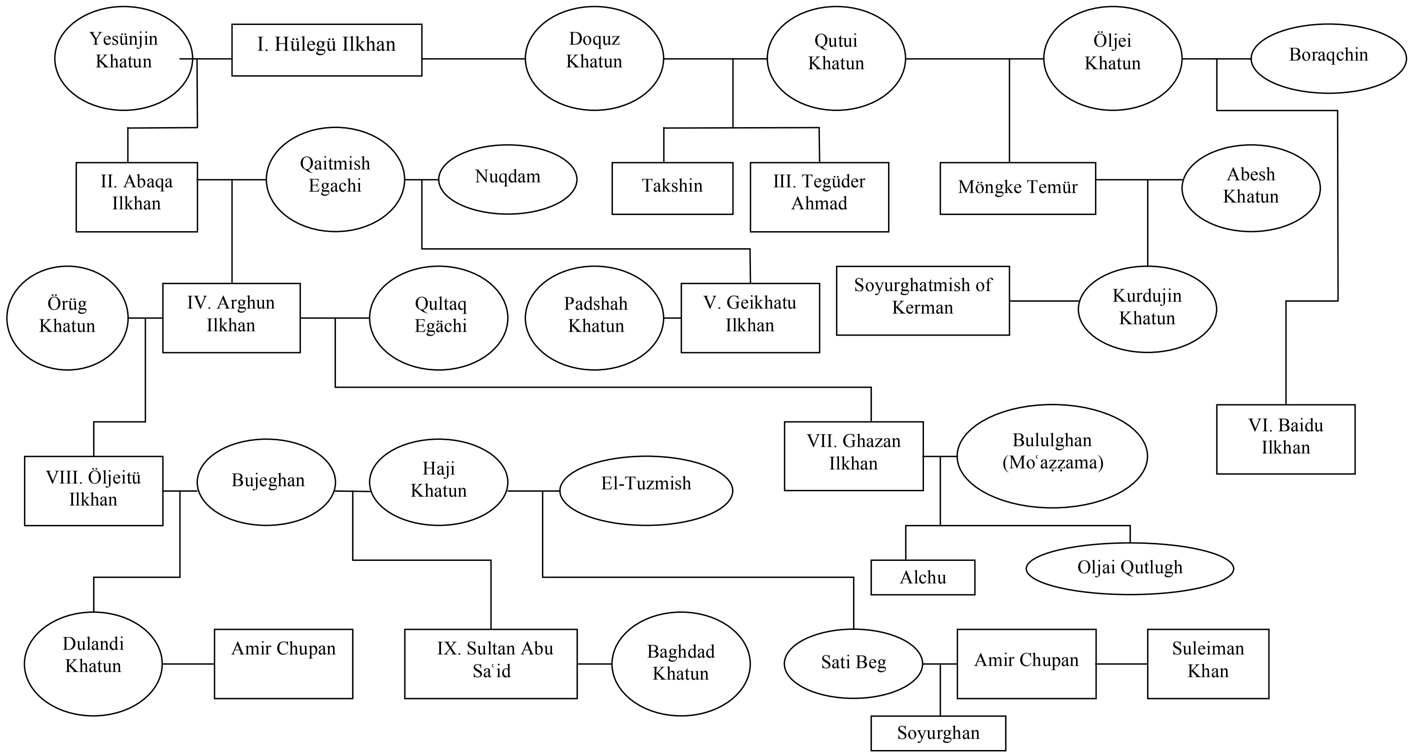


Figure 3.1 The Ilkhans and *khātūns* of Iran

He enumerates the different territories he should conquer before offering some final remarks to his younger brother:

> Be awake and sober in all situations. Let the subjects be free of excessive taxes and impositions. Return devastated lands to flourishing state. Conquer the realm of the rebellious through the might of the great God so that your summer and winter pastures may be many. Consult Doquz Khātūn on all matters.[15]

There is no way of knowing whether the Great Khan ever pronounced these words, and it might be of only little interest even if he had, but what this quote illustrates is the high status acquired by Doquz Khatun, if not in her homeland then at least in Iran, where Rashid al-Din was writing his chronicle. The quotation lends weight to the notion of a Toluid conception of government based mostly on protecting the sedentary lands by taxing them in accordance with the idea of rule fostered first by Sorghaghtani Beki and later on by her son Qubilai in China. If the Toluids were not entirely aware of this model, the 'official' Persian historians of the early fourteenth century looked back at them – and particularly at their women Sorghaghtani and Doquz – as depositaries of this idea of governance.

Specific interventions by Doquz Khatun into political affairs are recorded in two Arabic sources. They mention that an Ayyubid prince went to Hülegü's court to present his father's submission to the Mongols. Doquz Khatun offered the prince the chance to stay with her and become her son, promising him command of a region and a hundred horsemen.[16] A second statement refers to her mediating with the Khan in order to bestow *amān* to this same prince.[17] This latter action illustrates the queen's political involvement in state affairs, interceding in a way that closely resembles the interventions made by Mongol *khātūns* in pre-imperial Mongolia. Unfortunately, no other specific intervention by Doquz Khatun into state affairs is mentioned, as far as I am aware, in the available sources, where most of her deeds are related to her position as a Christian queen.[18] Doquz died very soon after Hülegü and three months before the coronation of his successor Abaqa Khan (r. 1265–82). The succession process differed significantly from those held in the empire in the 1240s, where the struggle for succession arose during the female regencies in-between *quriltais.* On this occasion, no women were considered for the regency and Abaqa ascended the throne because he knew 'well the customs and ancient *yosun* [Mongol tradition] and *yasa*, and Hülegü Khan made him the heir designate during his lifetime'.[19] The proximity of the heir to the court (he was in Mazandaran in northern Iran) might be a possible reason why there was no need for an interregnum after Hülegü's death, allowing Abaqa to quickly seize the Ilkhanate throne. However, we could also add that the

fact that Doquz, the most influential *khātūn* of Iran, had passed away a few months earlier leaving no sons of her own, might have mitigated the further involvement of women in this succession.

Abaqa Khan was born of Yesünjin Khatun (d. 1272), who had not accompanied Hülegü to the west, but arrived later on with other *khātūns* and sons of the new ruler of Iran.[20] He established his capital in Tabriz and enjoyed a relatively peaceful succession process, having only mild opposition from his brother Yoshmut who, finding himself without support, returned to his region in northern Iran.[21] The relationship between the brothers does not seem to have been conflictive, since soon afterwards Yoshmut was leading an army against Noqai of the Golden Horde, with whom hostilities had resumed. In fact, Abaqa's Ilkhanate was surrounded by enemies because, apart from the enmity with his cousins of the Golden Horde and Central Asia, he had to deal with the opposition of the Mamluk dynasty in Egypt.[22] This political situation, which presented a Muslim alternative in the Middle East to the new pagan Mongol rulers of Iran, led Abaqa to constantly look towards the Christian West for allies and on several occasions he sent embassies to European kingdoms and popes.[23] But, while Abaqa's legitimacy seems to have been unquestioned, the situation changed after his death in 1282, beginning a period of internal dispute in the Ilkhanate that saw the rise of the first Mongol ruler to convert to Islam, Tegüder Ahmad Khan (r. 1282–4), who after two years was overthrown by Abaqa's son Arghun (r. 1284–91).[24]

The sources do not generally portray Tegüder as a great ruler and his short reign did not allow him to leave a political legacy beyond his Muslim faith. His mother, however, was an interesting character, though someone not generally mentioned by scholars in the field. Qutui Khatun belonged to the Qonqirat people and arrived in Iran with the second wave of Hülegü's relatives, those who had remained in Mongolia when he had set out on his conquest of Iran.[25] This later group seem to have arrived around the year 1268, when they were received by Abaqa, who 'went out in greeting'.[26] In the same paragraph, Rashid al-Din speaks of Qutui Khatun a number of times and, despite the fact that many of Hülegü's sons were in her company, the narrative seems to be constructed around her.[27] The frequency with which she is mentioned by name indicates that, by the time Rashid al-Din was writing his chronicle, this particular *khātūn* was well enough known among his readership for her presence as a leading figure in the expedition to be highlighted. Another Persian chronicler, Hamd Allah Mustawfi, describes Qutui Khatun as 'a moon emulating the sun, who made the heart of the shah joyful', and Rashid al-Din says that she was 'extremely intelligent and clever'.[28] Without ever being named queen,

she was nevertheless recorded several times as being instrumental in the coronation, rule and deposition of her son.

Two political parties had confronted each other after Abaqa's death in 1282 and, interestingly enough, they were led by Hülegü's wives, though they came to Iran in different expeditions. One was Öljei Khatun, an Oyrat woman who had accompanied Hülegü to the west, and the other was the abovementioned Qutui Khatun of the Qonqirat people.[29] Both of them hurried to support their respective sons' claims to the throne. Like Qutui, Öljei Khatun had achieved high status in Iran too and, apart from being the wife of both Hülegü and Abaqa, she took charge of the care of the son of the Abbasid caliph after the latter had been executed by Hülegü in 1258.[30] Not surprisingly, in the *quriltai* that was held to elect the new Ilkhan 'disagreement prevailed' between the two parties.[31] Öljei Khatun pushed to have her son nominated, while other members of the royal family and the amirs supported Tegüder's claim.[32] The turning point came when, while the argument was in progress between the two factions, news arrived of the death of Möngke Temür, Öljei's son, clearing the way for Qutui to elevate her son to Iran's throne.[33]

Tegüder was finally enthroned on 6 May 1282 and, because of his Muslim faith, he took the name Ahmad.[34] His faith changed the dynamics of Mongol external alliances, especially in relation to the Mamluk Sultanate. Upon being enthroned, the new Ilkhan sent a threatening embassy to Sultan Qalawun of Egypt emphasising the fact that the ruler of Iran was now a Muslim and a protector of the faith. Tegüder also informed the Sultan of his intention to establish Islamic law in his realm, and set out to pardon criminals, inspect religious endowments, protect pilgrims and found religious buildings.[35] As Anne F. Broadbridge has noted, these measures undermined Qalawun's legitimacy as the 'protector of Islam', whilst a demand for submission and vassalage was included in the letter sent by Tegüder and his scribes to Egypt.[36] In response, Qalawun's chancellory played the card of seniority in Islam (or seniority of conversion to Islam) in an attempt to retain his legitimacy as the 'king of Islam' and indicated that he would accept peace as an equal but not as a vassal of the Mongol Ilkhan.[37] The fact that peace had been considered an option at some point in this diplomatic exchange has been interpreted by some scholars as an attempt by the Mongol rulers to reach peace with the Mamluks for the first time; such an attempt, if sincere, came to naught.[38]

Despite this crucial diplomatic activity occurring during his reign, Tegüder does not seem to have spent too much time taking care of state affairs. A description by Rashid al-Din portrays the situation in the court of Sultan Ahmad in the following terms:

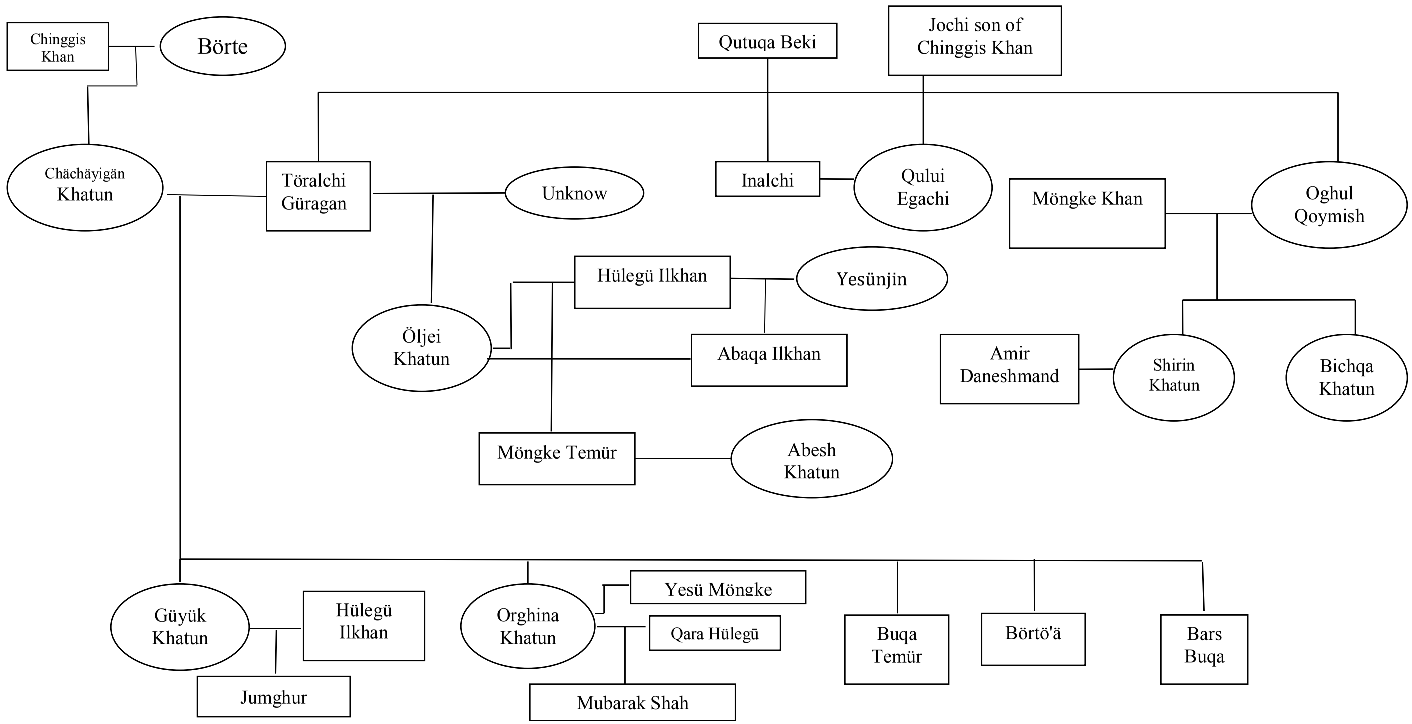


Figure 3.2 The early Oyrats and their connection to the Chinggisid family

> He [Ahmad Tegüder] used to go often to his house [of Shaykh Abdul-Rahman], which was near the back gate of the ordu, and participated in sama^c [music], paying little attention to matters of finance and state. His mother Qutui Khatun, who was extremely intelligent and clever, took care of fiscal affairs together with Asiq. … In short, with Shaykh Abdul-Rahman's and Sahib Shamsuddin's approval he sent Mawlana Qutbuddin Shirazi, the most learned man in the world, on an embassy to Egypt on [25 August 1282].[39]

This scenario appears similar to that of the Mongol Empire at the time of Töregene, where rulers relied on members of the family and the local amirs to govern, but fundamentally left their authority in the hands of their mothers. However, Qutui was never recognised as empress or Ilkhan of Iran, whereas Töregene appears as empress in Chinese and Persian sources. It is difficult to assess the situation precisely, but it is reasonable To suggest that Qutui was to some extent in charge of the administration She not only received diplomatic envoys sent to her son but also engineered,at least in part, a foreign policy strategy of the Mongols towards the Mamluk Sultanate.[40] Though her authority was not recognised officially, some hints suggest that she was recognised as being the one in charge by the Ilkhan himself, who did not make a decision regarding the affairs of state until his mother had had the last word on the matter.[41] In other words, and to express it with the terminology used by Quade-Reutter based on political science, Qutui would have exercised 'power' (*Macht*) but not 'rule' (*Herrschaft*) over the Ilkhanate.

Tegüder's reign appears to have been far from popular among certain sections of the Mongol and Persian elites. An opposition began to emerge, instigated by supporters of Arghun, the son of Abaqa and consequently the Ilkhan's nephew.[42] The enmity between Arghun and Tegüder increased during the two years of the latter's rule (and Qutui's administration), with Arghun and important members of Hülegü's family sealing alliances against the ruling Ilkhan behind his back. One important alliance that Arghun managed to consolidate was with Qonqurtai. Rashid al-Din states that 'On July 12, 1282, Ahmad rewarded Qonqurtai, gave him Toqiyatai Khātūn and sent him off to guard Anatolia'.[43] Arghun gained the confidence of this member of the royal family, who had originally supported Tegüder, and secured a political alliance with him. Interestingly enough, this pact was sealed 'in the *ordu* of Toqiyatai Khātūn, who had mediated the friendship, and they swore that henceforth envoys would be exchanged. This was the reason [why] Qonqurtai was [later] killed [by Tegüder]'.[44] Arghun also seems to have attracted the support of the party which had proposed Möngke Temür for the throne in 1282 as an alternative to Tegüder. Playing a decisive role in this group was Hülegü's widow

Öljei Khatun and, once Arghun was on the throne, she was made responsible with the task of punishing rebels on behalf of the new Ilkhan.[45]

When Tegüder realised the betrayal, he immediately replaced Qonqurtai with Alinaq and sent the latter to arrest Arghun. Some members of the royal family joined Alinaq, placing themselves under his command, setting the arena for an open civil war in the Ilkhanate.[46] Lagzi, the son of the influential amir Arghun Aqa, 'went with a troop and attacked Qutlugh Khātūn's [Arghun's chief wife] ordu and pillaged her baggage'.[47] After seeing the *ordo* of one of his wives' being plundered, Arghun decided to submit and

> set out with Būlūghān Khātūn ['Bozorg'] for Aḥmad's camp, and on Thursday the 13th of Rabi^{c} II [19 June 1284] he came before Aḥmad, who embraced him and kissed his face. Then he turned him over to Alinaq and said, 'Keep him well until we get to Qutui Khātūn and try him'.[48]

Two women are presented here as political actors in the struggle. On the one hand, the Ilkhan's mother is recognised once again as the person having the last word in the affairs of state. On the other, a new woman appears on the scene: Bulughan Khatun (d. 1286) is the only person mentioned whom Arghun chose to accompany him to meet the Ilkhan.[49] In addition to Bulughan's importance in the economic and military power balance of the Ilkhanate, she is also described as being responsible for organising a banquet for Tegüder and his subordinates once he had imprisoned Arghun.[50] During the reception, while Arghun was kept under the surveillance of Alinaq, she sent a message to her husband telling him about a plot to get Alinaq drunk, attack the guards and release him from captivity. The plan was successful and, on 4 July 1284, 'Arghun, who had been a prisoner when night fell, woke up in the morning as the emperor of the face of the earth'.[51] Immediately afterwards, Alinaq was put to death and the victorious faction advanced to the camp of the Ilkhan to seize him and put Arghun on the throne.

The whole description of events made by Rashid al-Din and followed by other Persian historians of the time underlines the importance of women in the process of kingmaking. Women were deeply involved in the political development of the Ilkhanate in the early years of the 1280s. First, Arghun made his claim to the throne with the argument that it was Möngke Temür who should have been named Ilkhan after his father's death; by doing this, he gained the support of Möngke's mother, Öljei Khatun. Faced with Arghun's diplomatic and military offensive, now Tegüder Ahmad's reaction was to withdraw and put his mother Qutui Khatun in charge of the new succession crisis.[52] She once again stepped up for her son and began organising the resistance of her son's supporters

against the usurper Arghun. However, unfortunately for Qutui, she could not foresee that

> all of a sudden the Qara'una army arrived and plundered those ordus so thoroughly that, aside from the ashes in the fireplaces, not a trace remained. They left Qutui Khātūn, Tödai Khātūn, and Armini Khātūn naked and two thousand of them took up guard over Ahmad.[53]

The invasion of the Qara'unas and the damage they made to the properties and armies of Tegüder by sacking the possessions of his wives and mother appear to have served as the *coup de grâce* to Qutui's aspiration to maintain her son on the throne.[54]

Following the downfall of Qutui, a quick replacement for the role of influential woman in the Ilkhanate was found in the form of Bulughan Khatun. As Melville has noted, the importance gained by Bulughan is testified to by the fact that, when she died on 23 Safar 685 (20 April 1286), Arghun wanted a woman from her family to succeed her and sent a request to Qubilai in China for a relative of Bulughan to be sent to Iran.[55] Princess Kokachin was dispatched from China to become Arghun's wife, but, by the time of her arrival, he was dead and so she instead married Ghazan Khan (r. 1295–1304).[56] During Arghun's reign, Bulughan and Öljei remained the most influential women in the court, but when they passed away, other wives began to grow in importance.[57] More significantly, the pivotal role of kingmaker among Arghun's wives was played by Örüg Khatun, about whom nothing appears in the sources until the death of her husband in 1291 and the rise of her new husband, Geikhatu Ilkhan (r. 1291–5).[58] Rashid al-Din mentions that in 1291, immediately after Arghun's death, she masterminded a plan in support of Geikhatu against his rival Baidu.[59] The succession was contested by three factions initially: Geikhatu, Baidu (grandson of Hülegü by his son Taraghai) and Ghazan Khan (Arghun's son). Ghazan Khan withdrew, though, and remained in Khurasan.[60]

Obviously, all the potential candidates for the throne of the Ilkhanate were direct descendants of Hülegü but while Geikhatu and Ghazan were from the line of Abaqa, Baidu represented a different line of succession.[61] The struggle for the Ilkhanid throne became a contest between two lines of descent, one represented by the Abaqaids and another by the non-Abaqaid Huleguids.[62] In turn, the nomadic tradition of elected regency seems to have disappeared among the Mongols in Iran, and the reunion held by family members to elect the new Ilkhan became a ritual, rather than actually being a king's election meeting. Perhaps the comparatively short distances in the Ikhanate *vis-à-vis* the united Mongol Empire might have played a role in making unnecessary the establishment of a regent

for short inter-regnun periods in Mongol Iran as was required for the Great Khanate. But also, once the royal succession became hereditary through the male line of Hülegü's sons, women were of course ruled out from becoming regents or queens of the Ilkhanate. However, they seem to have adapted to the new political scenario. During Geikhatu's reign, Örüg Khatun is presented as a counsellor of the Ilkhan, and as someone needing his approval to issue commands. Geikhatu's reluctance to shed blood is usually highlighted in the sources, with the responsibility for overseeing punishment being assigned to his wife.[63] For example, the rebel Toghan was sentenced to death only after Örüg Khatun had convinced the Ilkhan that, if he were pardoned, 'no one will serve you wholehearted from this day forth'.[64] In contrast with Mongol queens of previous periods such as Orghina, Töregene, Qutui and even Öljei (Hülegü's wife), Örüg's influence was restricted to advising her husband and we have no evidence of her effectively ruling over affairs of state. Toghan was not executed until the Ilkhan had replied: 'Certainly that is what someone who does what he has done deserves'.[65]

After Geikhatu's reign came to an end in 1294, and moving into the fourteenth century, there is a very slow but steady decrease in the amount of information about women in Ilkhanid state affairs. One reason is that Rashid al-Din's account of the Mongol Empire ends at the time of Ghazan's reign and so we are deprived thereafter of the detailed account of women that the Persian historian had provided for the earlier period. However, we do have Kashani's *Tarikh-i Uljaytu* for the period of Öljeitü's reign (r. 1304–16), and in its references to women it offers a clear contrast to Rashid al-Din's earlier chronicles of the Ilkhanate. Kashani dedicates only a few pages to describing the wives and daughters of a new ruler and only sporadically refers to them later on in the text, mostly to mark the dates of their deaths or marriages.[66] Some of Öljeitü's wives are mentioned, but mostly in relation to the 'revolt of the amirs' that occurred after his death.[67] It might be the case that Rashid al-Din had better access to the role of women in the political events of the Ilkhanate than those Persian historians that succeded him. However, as we will see in Chapters 4 and 5, an economic and religious transformation certainly transformed the women's pivotal role in the political arena of the Ilkhanate from the late thirteenth century onwards. Despite recent disagreements concerning the validity of the claim of there being a 'decline' of the Mongol Empire,[68] the reign of Abu Sa^{c}id (r. 1317–35) points towards transformations in the kingship structure of the Ilkhanate where an Abaqaid line of succession was imposed, limiting the political influence of court members (including women) in state affairs.

After Öljeitü's death in 1316, his eldest living son, Abu Saʿid, was put on the throne without encountering any opposition, something that was in itself new to the Ilkhanate.[69] The new king was born in 1305 and so when he was proclaimed king he was only eleven years old. The youth of the new Ilkhan Abu Saʿid caused a similar power vacuum to the one that had occurred after the deaths of Ögetei Khan in 1241 and Güyük Khan in 1248, or even after the death of Qara-Hülegü of the Chaghataid Khanate in 1252. As we have seen in Chapter 2, on all these three occasions, women had stepped in to take control of the realm as regents for their sons. However, while a parallel situation, female regency was not adopted in the Ilkhanate despite the fact that the mother of the young king was not only alive but was herself a noble descendant of Hülegü.[70] Instead, the person chosen to be regent was Amir Chopan, the son of Todan Bahadur of the Suldus people, who had had a prolific political career supporting first Geikhatu, then Baidu, ultimately abandoning the latter in order to join forces with Ghazan Khan.[71] Amir Chopan's election seems to have been organised directly by Öljeitü,[72] but his legitimacy also rested, to some extent, on his marriage to two daughters of the deceased Ilkhan.[73] He was named *amīr al-umarāʾ* (chief Amir or commander-in-chief of the army) and increasingly took control of the kingdom, provoking the opposition of other amirs in the court.[74] It was not until around 1325 that the Ilkhan, now twenty years of age, began to challenge Chopan's authority, and it was a woman who was the trigger for the conflict that ensued.[75]

Baghdad Khatun was the daughter of the Amir Chopan and Abu Saʿid had fallen madly in love with her. Since Chopan's daughter was already married, the amir initially opposed any new union, which provided the Ilkhan with the justification to remove Chopan from his position and to persecute his sons.[76] Once the amir was defeated and killed, Abu Saʿid married Baghdad Khatun, who is credited with having substantial influence over him from then on.[77] This period in the history of Iran is characterised by the constant exchanging of alliances and by betrayals in the court, in which these women played a prominent role.[78] However, their political activity, as presented in the available sources, seems to have been restricted to the court itself, with the role of women in this period revolving around conspiracies to assassinate various members of the royal family, as they pursued their particular personal or family interest. If we trust the post Ilkhanid sources that describe her life, Baghdad Khatun was a queen consort of Iran constantly conspiring to manipulate her husband in order to favour the interests of the remainder of the Chopanid family. She was put on trial, accused of organising a plot to assassinate Abu Saʿid around 1330, together with her former husband Shaykh Hasan.[79] Initially,

the Ilkhan gave credence to the accusation but her life was spared thanks to the intervention of her mother Kurdujin Beki Khatun. Apart from mother of Baghdad Khatun and widow of Amir Chopan, Kurdujin Beki was the aunt of the Ilkhan himself, which certainly contributed to retain the favour of the Abu Sa^{c}id.[80] A committee was formed to investigate the issue and eventually the two accused were exonerated. This incident seems to have reinforced the role of Baghdad Khatun in the court in such a way that ‘the two lovers ruled together the affairs of the kingdom, to the extent that any other influence [in government] was eclipsed’.[81]

It seems that the royal couple managed to calm the internal turmoil that Mongol Iran was experiencing in the third and fourth decades of the fourteenth century. As Mustawfi notes in his history,

> after the marriage [between Baghdad Khatun and Abu Sa^{c}id] was solemnised and right was done; the chief of the princesses took her place beside the shah and as a result, kingdom and sovereign became great. Thanks to this good fortune, the famous Chopans had served him [the Sultan] in another way.[82]

However, the death of Abu Sa^{c}id on 13 Rabi^{c} II 736 (30 November 1335)[83] marked the beginning of a new succession struggle, which eventually led to the end of the line of Hülegü rulers in Iran. The struggle for the Ilkhanate was fought between different factions such as Chopanids, who represented the bureaucratic and more ‘Persianised’ branch of the Mongol elite, and other pro-Mongol *noyans* (military commanders) who supported a more traditional Mongol state.[84] Disagreement over the succession provoked a deep crisis in which the political unity of the Ilkhanate were at stake. The *noyan* party accused Baghdad Khatun of poisoning Abu Sa^{c}id and of committing treachery by suggesting (most probably falsely) that she contacted Ozbek Khan, the ruler of the Golden Horde, to organise an invasion of the Ilkhanate.[85] Whilst Baghdad represented the Chopanid interest, Arpa Khan emerged as the *noyan* alternative, and one of his first actions after taking control was to order the execution of Baghdad Khatun on the above charges.[86] The Golden Horde invaded northern Iran and Arpa saw his chance to legitimise his right to rule despite not being a direct descendant of Hülegü. Although he defeated Ozbek’s troops, this seems not to have been enough to claim the throne and it was necessary to marry Sati Beg, the sister of Abu Sa^{c}id and widow of Chopan, in order to present himself as the legitimate ruler of Iran.[87]

But, in spite of his marriage and military victories, Arpa’s position was still not secured. The Mongol custom of elective monarchy among members of the royal family had fallen into desuetude and a direct family connection with the founder of the dynasty through the line of his son

Abaqa had long been the main criterion to legitimise a new ruler in the eyes of many of the Ilkhanid elite. There seems to have been great internal opposition towards Arpa's 'Mongol' manners and the viziers of different regions challenged his right to rule. The governor of Baghdad, ᶜAli Padshah, and Abu Said's maternal uncle put forward an alternative Ilkhan in the person of Musa (grandson of Baidu), and decided to attack Arpa.[88] Both sides fought in 1336, with Arpa fleeing, but ultimately being captured and executed a month later. New khans began appearing in different areas of Iran and Khurasan and a succession of battles took place, with betrayals and executions spreading among the viziers and the extensive Mongol royal family.[89] Of the many factions, two major contenders prevailed: Shaykh Hasan 'Bozorg' and Shaykh Hasan Kuchek.[90] Trying to content their supporters, the two engaged in a constant switching of alliances and appointing of khans, but what is interesting is that, at some point in this struggle, the Chopanid Shaykh Hasan Kuchek decided to revert to a Mongol tradition never used before in Iran and appointed a woman, Sati Beg (r. 1339), as the Ilkhan of Iran.[91] Being herself a direct descendant of Hülegü and at the same time the former wife of Chopan, she should in theory have been a suitable regent in the eyes of both parties in the dispute. The desperate search for a monarch had already led some of the nobles of both sides to reconsider female rule as a last option some time before Sati Beg's appointment.[92]

Thus, the chaotic last years of the Ilkhanate did eventually see a woman sitting on the throne. She seemed to gain recognition of her rule when the *khuṭba* was pronounced in her name in mosques and coins were issued proclaiming her queenship.[93] However, her accession had been part of a political manoeuvre carried out by Hasan Kuchek in the context of the internal disputes in Iran. Sati Beg was left precious little real power to exercise any type of political authority.[94] In the sources, she is portrayed as a puppet in the hands of Hasan. He unilaterally sent a message to a rival offering him Queen Sati Beg in marriage, his only aim being to lure the rival into a trap. According to Hafiz-i Abru, she had no voice whatsoever in the matter and was completely dependent on the wishes of the male members of the royal family and the amirs.[95] Consequently, sources for this period offer a very different view on the influence of ruling women from that of the later earlier Mongol Empire. The difference between this queen and the nomadic *khātūn* queens of the mid-thirteenth century is significant. The women in this period seem to have lost their importance, for not only were they no longer active as political agents in state affairs, in contrast with their Mongol empress predecessors, but they were also deprived of their economic autonomy and the highly influential positions

they had once occupied (see Chapter 4). It seems that these women only played a role at a symbolic level, when there was no agreement over whom the male ruler should be, with female rule being completely dependent on male patronage. It was under these circumstances that the reign of the only official queen of the Ilkhanate lasted a mere nine months, at the end of which, 'towards the end of 739 [July 1339] it occurred to "Little" Amir Shaykh-Hasan that Iran could not be ruled by a woman … and he forced Sati-Beg to marry Sulayman Khan',[96] bringing to an end the rule of the line of Hülegü, who had arrived in Iran over eighty years earlier.

Mongol rule in Iran is marked by the absence of any woman being recognised as ruler in the way that women had been in the times of the unified empire or in Central Asia. However, this did not prevent women from participating in state affairs in a number of ways. Those female political practices examined in the previous chapter, which took place in the period prior to Hülegü's campaign in the west, remained as core characteristics of women's political activity. Women continued to occupy high positions at court, participated in the election of the new ruler by establishing alliances in support of their sons, and acted as counsellors to their male counterparts (sons or husbands). In this period, there was no nominal recognition of female rule, but Mongol women nevertheless played a crucial role in the political arena in Iran, supporting members of the royal family who aspired to the throne. The role of women in Mongol Iran changed after Ghazan Khan's conversion to Islam. The centralisation measures of the new *Padshah al-Islam* and his Persian amirs progressively denied women their role as active political agents, replacing it with a role more limited to court conspiracies, unable to act on clear political agenda in the way their predecessors had done. Women seem to have been confined to being transmitters of a legitimacy to rule, bestowed on them by virtue of their place in the kinship structure of the royal family. The case of Sati Beg is the exception that confirms the rule and it represents the last attempt by a political faction that in trying to gain control of the Ilkhanate, revives a Mongol custom of female rule that had no precedent in Mongol Iran. Establishing a woman as ruler appears as a graphic representation of a distinctive Mongol-nomadic phenomenon that, by the end of the fourth decade of the fourteenth century, seems to have lost the 'identity battle' with the Muslim-Persian native population, at least with regard to female rule.[97]

Women's Rule in the Ilkhanid Provinces

If in the eighty years of Mongol rule in Iran only one woman acquired nominal recognition as head of state under very particular circumstances,

ruling women did not entirely disappear from the Ilkhanate. The regions south of the Iranian plateau, Anatolia and the Caucasus were governed by local dynasties of Turkic origin (the Qutlughkhanids, the Salghurids and the Saljuqs of Rum) that were subject to the Mongols.[98] In these areas, the political status of women followed different paths from the centre of power located in north-western Iran. In certain provinces, women ruled as legitimate heads of state in similar ways to women during the united Mongol Empire and Central Asia in the 1250s, but in all of them they maintained their active participation in the political scene. This section focuses on three specific regions under Ilkhanid rule. First, we explore the particularities of female rule in the province of Kerman under the Qutlughkhanid dynasty (r. 1222–1306). Second, we pay attention to the province of Fars and the rule of Abesh Khatun, a woman of the Salghurid dynasty connected to the Mongols that ruled south-western Iran in the thirteenth century. Finally, we look at some cases of influential women in Anatolia and the Caucasus, where proximity to the royal centre of power might have had an influence on the development of female rule in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The Qutlughkhanids of Kerman

The founder of this local dynasty was Baraq Hajib (d. 1234–5) an amir of the Qarakhitai dynasty in Central Asia who saw the opportunity to seize the province of Kerman in 1222.[99] In order to secure his position, he married one of his daughters to Jalal al-Din Khwarazmshah and another to Chinggis Khan's son Chaghatai, thus securing the favour of the two forces that were at the time battling for Central Asia and Khurasan.[100] The Qarakhitaid origin of the dynasty is a key element in understanding the continuity of the institution of female regency in Kerman, as shown in Chapter 2. Similar to the succession process seen among the Western Liao or the cases of Töregene and Oghul Qaimish, it was after the death of a male ruler, Qutb al-Din Muhammad in 1257, that a woman assumed control of the province of Kerman.[101] Terken Qutlugh Khatun (d. 1282/3) ruled the kingdom of Kerman for twenty-six years – a period considered to be the 'golden age' of the region of Kerman – as the legitimate ruler of the kingdom despite the fact that a son of her husband, Hijaj Sultan, was still alive.[102]

The sources report a seemingly straightforward succession, with the arrival of a woman on the throne depicted as a natural and common occurrence. Terken's first political moves followed a similar pattern to those of the former Mongol empresses. According to Vassaf, she took control of

the affairs of state and began to send gifts in order to gain recognition of her right to rule.[103] There is confusion in the sources regarding the relationship between Terken and the two possible male heirs of Kerman. Some accounts say that Hijaj was her stepson and others consider him to be her biological son.[104] If the first construction is correct, the circumstance of Terken's enthronement was different from that of her predecessors in the sense that Mongol women usually assumed regency on behalf of their biological sons. However, most sources do represent Hijaj as her son and say that she went to Hülegü when her husband had died to ask for a *yarligh* confirming her regency over Kerman. The process appears to have been straightforward, with no indication that the Mongol ruler hesitated to grant her the throne.[105] This attitude is not surprising when one considers the Mongol Empire as a whole. Beyond the Qarakhitai origin of Terken's dynasty, within the still united Mongol Empire, the reign of Terken was contemporaneous with that of Orghina Khatun in Central Asia, the woman acknowledged as ruler by the Great Khan Möngke, and the *khātūn* who had welcomed Hülegü on his way to Iran.[106]

Terken's strong determination to secure her political position as regent of Kerman can be seen in the way she played her cards in the Ilkhanate political arena. The *yarligh* from Hülegü apparently left the army outside the queen's control and was assigned to her son-in-law by her eldest daughter Bibi Terken.[107] She contested the decision and 'set out for the *ordu* [of Hülegü], accompanied by the great men of Kirman. There she obtained a new *yarligh* entrusting all the affairs of the province, civil and military, to her'.[108] Furthermore, she masterminded the political alliances between Kerman and the Mongol *ulus* of Iran, which marked the political development of the region in the thirteenth century.[109] She did this in a number of ways. First, she secured the marriage previously arranged by her husband between Sultan Hijaj and a daughter of the powerful amir Arghun Aqa (Beki Khatun), and it took place during an expedition of the amir in Georgia. The lady was brought to Kerman in 1264.[110] Second, she made an important move when, some years later, she succeeded in marrying her daughter Padshah Khatun to Abaqa Ilkhan, who became the new ruler of Iran in 1265.[111] Her political affiliation to the Ilkhans went beyond marriage alliances: she mobilised the Kerman troops to aid Abaqa's military expedition against the Chaghataid Khanate in 1271–2, putting Sultan Hijaj in command.[112] This campaign had two consequences for Terken's reign: (1) it honoured with the military support of the Qutlughkhanids the marriage between the Ilkhan and Padshah Khatun; (2) the prestigious victory gave a now adolescent Hijaj the political momentum he needed to challenge Terken and try to seize control of the realm.[113]

The chronicles treat somewhat poetically the opposition that Hijaj, encouraged by the success of the military campaign, began to formulate against Terken's rule. It is mentioned that in a public meeting he recited the following verses to her:

> پیرند چرخ و اختر و بخت تونوجوان   ان به که پیر نوبت خود با جوان دهد[114]
>
> Young are your destiny and star, but old is your fortune; the one that is old should make way for the young.

Her son's offensive words seem to have disturbed Terken to the point of finding her way to Abaqa's *ordo* to ask for a second *yarligh* confirming her right to rule Kerman.[115] According to Rashid al-Din, because of the marriage of her daughter to the Ilkhan, 'she used to go to Court every two or three years and to return loaded with honours'.[116] Despite the confirmation, tension between mother and son grew until in 1279–80 Hijaj finally made an attempt to take control of Kerman and remove his mother from power.[117] He was unsuccessful and the young prince was forced into exile in Delhi, where he died more than ten years later.[118]

It seems that Terken managed to resist this attempted coup thanks not only to the powerful alliances she had forged with the Mongol court, but also to the strong support she received from Kerman itself. Accounts of her reign generally point out the fairness of her decision-making and the order she was able to keep in the region.[119] She seems to have been officially recognised as ruler of the realm, with some sources reporting that her name was mentioned in the *khuṭba*.[120] However, the political situation in the Ilkhanate changed when Abaqa died in 1282 and Tegüder Ahmad ascended the throne. The favour Terken had enjoyed under the previous Ilkhan (her son-in-law) was undermined by a new concept of the Ilkhanate that the now Muslim-Mongol Ilkhan put into practice. The short rule of Ahmad undermined the stability of Iran, giving Terken's stepson Soyurghatmish the opportunity to carry out what his brother Hejaj had failed to accomplish a few years earlier. Obtaining a *yarligh* from Tegüder that granted him the right to rule Kerman, he displaced Terken from the position she had occupied for twenty-six years.[121]

In the upheavals that occurred in the royal *ordo* during Tegüder's reign, the political agenda of influential women clashed. As we have seen above, during the two years of this Muslim Ilkhan, responsibility for the affairs of state was in the hands of his mother Qutui Khatun. It is mentioned that the Ilkhan's mother was fundamental in supporting Soyurghatmish's claim against Terken by blocking the latter's return to Kerman, thus preventing a possible alliance between her and the prince Arghun, who was in charge of Khurasan.[122] Qutui's political strategy was to cut off all the support

that Terken had built up over the years with the royal *ordo* of Abaqa. The *ordo* was now led by Arghun, who had become the most important rival to Tegüder for the succession.[123] Faced with this situation, Terken turned her hopes towards the *ṣāḥib dīvān* Shams al-Din Juvayni, and went to Tabriz to meet him.[124] Unfortunately for her, she was not successful in her attempt to use this political channel to regain her kingdom, and she died in that city of north-western Iran in 1282.[125]

The dynastic history of the Ilkhanate in this period is marked by a struggle between those who were supporters of the line of Hülegü through his son Abaqa and those who were pushing for a broader legitimising of kingship, with rulers being drawn from amongst the descendants of the founder of the Ilkhanate.[126] This succession instability seems to have mitigated against Terken Khatun's aspirations to maintain control over Kerman, but it was exactly this 'pendulum politics' of the Ilkhanate that would return female rule to Kerman shortly after Terken's reign had ended. Initially, Soyurghatmish remained in charge of Kerman for two years, but, when Arghun became Ilkhan in 1284, Soyurghatmish was summoned to court to be questioned about his support for Tegüder; additionally, a decision had to be made about what should happen to the region. Soyurghatmish is recorded as going 'with fear and trembling' to the court, where he was awaited by Terken's daughters, Padshah Khatun and Bibi Terken, who had both opposed his claim to the throne of Kerman.[127] Bibi Terken, together with her son Nusrat al-Din Yuluk-Shah, challenged Soyurghatmish in front of the Ilkhan, who initially ordered that Kerman be ruled by Padshah Khatun and Soyurghatmish together. However, Padshah was not satisfied with this agreement. She complained about its terms and expressed her disappointment with regard to the agreement reached by one of her representatives who was a supporter of Bibi Terken.[128] This caused division amongst the women. Soyurghatmish capitalised on the situation and found an opportunity to gain political support by marrying Kurdujin Khatun, a Mongol princess granddaughter of Hülegü by Möngke Temür and Abesh Katun.[129] The marriage secured Soyurghatmish's claim to Kerman. Arghun reversed his decision and ordered that Soyurghatmish be the sole ruler of the region.[130]

However, it is noteworthy that Hijaj's estates (*injü*), which were left in Kerman after his exile, were not given to the new ruler but put under the command of Bibi Terken's son Nusrat al-Din Yuluk-Shah.[131] Of further note is the fact that the Mongols seemed to control Kerman through a political manoeuvre which resembles the strategy used by the Yuan dynasty of China to control dependent territories such as that of the Koryo dynasty of Korea,[132] a strategy that consisted of marrying Mongol

royal princesses to local rulers and by this means achieving close control over their subjects. No doubt this was possible and effective due to the strong character of Mongol women and to the status accorded them in political matters. In this way, in order to minimise the enmity between the daughters and the sons of Qutb al-Din Qutlughkhanid, Padshah Khatun was given in marriage to Arghun's brother Geikhatu and was ordered to accompany him to the territories of Rum (Anatolia).[133] She waited there while her half-brother ruled Kerman for a total of nine years, probably realising that the pendulum would swing back sooner or later and that her chance to seize the governorship of Kerman would eventually come. When Arghun died, a quick move by his widow Örüg Katun ensured the election of Geikhatu to the throne (r. 1291–5).[134] One of the first measures taken by the new ruler was to give Kerman back to Padshah Khatun, who hastened towards her birthplace to revenge herself against the man who had removed her mother from the throne. When she arrived, her half-brother Soyurghatmish escaped and went to Geikhatu seeking asylum. The Mongol Ilkhan 'sent him to Padshāh khātūn … [she] held him in custody for several days and then put him to death'.[135] With the opposition eliminated, she secured for herself the role of queen of Kerman, following the tradition of female rule started by her mother in the region and by her Qarakhitai female ancestors in Central Asia.

In the same way that political developments in the Mongol court were fundamental to Padshah's enthronement, a new succession struggle brought about her decline. After the death of Geikhatu (d. 1295), the two conflicting notions of kingship clashed again. The rivals this time were Baidu (grandson of Hülegü by his son Taraghay) and Ghazan (son of Arghun and grandson of Abaqa). The former tried to seize the throne in 1291 on the death of Arghun, but was prevented by the political strategising of Örüg Khatun. At first it was Baidu who achieved short-lived success against Ghazan, and during this period women were once more the main protagonists in deciding the political future of Kerman. We need to take into account that Baidu was married to a daughter of Soyurghatmish called Shah ᶜAlam, who, immediately after her father started to make his political and military moves towards Baidu, had contacted Kurdujin Khatun in Kerman for help in overthrowing Padshah Khatun.[136] The former gathered the support of her loyal amirs and surrounded Kerman, forcing Padshah Khatun to surrender.[137] While under siege, the queen of Kerman sent messengers to Ghazan's *ordo* to seek an alliance with him, but, despite his agreement, she was captured and taken by Kurdujin to the court of Baidu. It seems that she attended the *quriltai* that elected the new ruler in 1295 and immediately afterwards Shah ᶜAlam persuaded her husband to grant

his approval for a group of men to enter Padshah's tent and assassinate her.[138]

Although she won the struggle, Kurdujin Khatun does not seem to have been officially proclaimed queen of Kerman and is not considered by the sources to have been a ruler of the region. The fact that Ghazan quickly overthrew Baidu and made himself Ilkhan might have prevented this woman from continuing the 'tradition' of female rule in Kerman. The Ilkhan Ghazan decided to bring the female line to an end and elevate a son of the exiled Hijaj instead.[139] The same pattern was followed by Öljeitü when he gave the kingdom to a son of Soyurghatmish, but the son was accused of misgovernment and the province was placed under the direct control of the Ilkhan.[140] Consequently, female rule in Kerman vanished after Padshah Khatun's reign had come to an end, but the women of the Qutlughkhanid dynasty represent the continuation of an institution that had survived since the time of its Qarakhitai origins in Central Asia, through the Mongol Empire and into southern Iran. It is remarkable that the end of this practice in Kerman coincided chronologically with a decrease in the incidence of women publicly acting as kingmakers in the Ilkhanate. The evidence, once again, seems to indicate a change in the perception of female rule during the reign of Ghazan Khan (1295–1304).

The Salghurids of Fars and the reign of Abesh Khatun (r. 1263–84)

The south-western province of Fars, continually linked to developments in Kerman, seems to have been influenced by the view that women might be openly recognised as rulers with the power to direct affairs of state in the region.[141] Female rule emerged in the area in 1261, during the reign of Hülegü, when the Salghurid ruler Sa^c^d II had died on his way to Shiraz to assume control after the death of his father Abu Bakr.[142] These were the circumstances in which Turkan Khatun,[143] a wife of Sa^c^d originally from Yazd, received a *yarligh* from Hülegü to rule in Fars as regent on behalf of her twelve-year-old son Muhammad.[144] Consequently, at this point in the history of the Ilkhanate the Mongol rulers had granted permission for the south of Iran to be ruled by both Terken Qutlugh Khatun in Kerman and Turkan Khatun in Fars. But, compared with her Kermani counterpart, Turkan was not as successful in, nor as capable of, maintaining her position as the supreme authority in the region. It seems that the local amirs had more influence in the Shirazi court than in Kerman; at least they seem to have had more influence on the queen's decisions. It is specifically mentioned in the sources that she relied on the support of Nizam al-Din Abu Bakr and Shams al-Din for the administration of the affairs of state and,

when her son died only one year and seven months after she had received the *yarligh* from Hülegü, her status as mother-regent could no longer be maintained.[145]

In the following years, Turkan Khatun nevertheless played a fundamental part in the succession struggles that took place in Fars. There is disagreement in the sources about the details, but it seems that, after the death of her son, Turkan Khatun's son-in-law Muhammad Shah, the nephew of the *atabeg* Abu Bakr, was on the throne for a short time.[146] But only a few months later, Turkan Khatun, plotting with a group of Shul people and Turkmen amirs, accused Muhammad Shah of 'not being fit to rule' and sent him to the Ilkhan to be judged.[147] In his place they installed his brother Saljuq Shah, whom Turkan hastened to marry.[148] The support of the Turkmen people might suggest that in Fars the struggle between two ideas of kingship was taking place. It seems that the nomadic groups were, characteristically, keener to have a woman as their representative in the succession struggle, while the sedentary population of Shiraz might have looked more favourably on the appointment of a male descendant of the Salghurid dynasty to rule the kingdom. This context of internal opposition might help to explain why eventually a marriage between Turkan and Saljuq Shah was arranged in an attempt to resolve this conflict of interest. Yet, it might also help us to better understand Turkan's death in 1264 and the different versions about her decease present in the sources.[149] Her time as ruler of Fars is not regarded as a 'golden age' in the same way as the reign of her contemporary Terken Qutlugh of Kerman. Some scholars have interpreted Turkan's political agenda as '*désastreuse*'. This, together with the incompetence of her subordinates and the internal divisions in the province, created the instability which justified the Mongols taking closer control of the province.[150]

However, the Mongol removal of Saljuq Shah in 1264 did provide the chance for another woman to claim the throne of Fars.[151] Turkan's daughter, Abesh Khatun, was appointed ruler of the realm by the Mongols the same year as her mother's passing, even though she was only four or five years old.[152] The alliances already secured by her mother had made her a perfect candidate for the throne. Since Abesh had been betrothed to Möngke Temür, the son of Hülegü Ilkhan, Hülegü saw the chance to increase his control over the region whilst at the same time maintaining the support of the local nomadic tribes.[153] Even though she was a puppet ruler in the service of the Mongols, Abesh was officially recognised as ruler of the dynasty and her name was mentioned in the *khuṭba*.[154] The Mongols increasingly limited the autonomy of the province: once in 1265, when some supporters of Abesh rebelled against the Mongols, and another time

when problems regarding the collection of revenues in the province arose under the reign of Abaqa Ilkhan in 1271.[155] In 1273, Abesh was taken to the Ilkhanid court for her marriage to be solemnised and so she became the chief wife of Möngke Temür.[156] The marriage is generally regarded as an example of the Mongol political strategy of marrying the daughters and female relatives of the ruling families of dependent kingdoms, the intention being eventually to inherit such realms and make them part of the Mongol royal family.[157] Fars seems to have been under the tutelage of Möngke Temür and governed by local amirs while Abesh spent time in her husband's *ordo* in the company of Hülegü's influential wife, Öljei Khatun. When Tegüder Ahmad became Ilkhan in 1282, he sent Möngke Temür to be governor of Shiraz while Abesh seems to have remained at the Mongol court.[158] However, Möngke Temür died shortly after his appointment and Abesh was then summoned to become the governor of Shiraz holding full legitimacy from the Mongols and the local Salghurids of the region.[159]

Abesh's arrival in Shiraz was received with delight by a population that ornamented the streets of the city with flowers to welcome their new governor.[160] However, her time in office was marked by constant conflict with the Ilkhanid court regarding tribute payments and the appropriation of estates.[161] The fact that Abesh was granted Shiraz by Tegüder seems to have been a factor in the direct intervention that Arghun attempted in the region. The new Ilkhan decided to send ᶜImad al-Din to Shiraz as governor of the region under orders to bring the queen back to the *ordo*. By this means, Arghun was able to fulfil a twofold purpose: he was rewarding ᶜImad for his services in the war against Tegüder and at the same time he was appointing someone he had confidence in to strengthen centralised control over the region.[162] Conflict arose between the new governor and the princess and shortly afterwards some of Abesh's followers organised a plot to kill ᶜImad al-Din.[163] Arghun was furious and immediately sent the nephew of the murdered governor to investigate. Interestingly, at this point Arghun asked for permission from, and justified his proposed actions to, Abesh's mother-in-law, Öljei Khatun.[164] Then, he sent for the queen of Fars to be brought to his court. At first the young Abesh refused to comply and instead sent presents to certain highly esteemed Mongol and Persian nobles in a diplomatic offensive resembling the strategies of Töregene and Sorghaghtani Beki.[165] But Abesh could not withstand the new attack launched by the Ilkhan and she was finally captured and sent to the royal *ordo* in Tabriz to be put to trial together with some of her dignitaries. They were found guilty and, whilst some of her relatives were executed, others were simply fined and had their estates confiscated and the property given to the poor and orphans.[166]

Abesh's life was spared, but the reason for the mercy shown by the

Ilkhan in the face of such subversion appears to have been brought about, not by any soft-heartedness on his part, but by the intervention of some of the influential women of the court. As we have seen above, Arghun counted on the support of Öljei Khatun in his struggle with Tegüder, so when he wanted to execute Abesh, the old lady interceded successfully in favour of her daughter-in-law.[167] When Abesh returned to Shiraz, the person in charge of the kingdom was Jalal al-Din, ᶜImad's nephew. Within a few days of her return in 1286–7, he avenged his uncle and killed the twenty-six-year-old Abesh by 'cutting her to pieces'.[168]

The rise and fall of Abesh is complex and many of the accounts are contradictory. However, the general picture seems to be of a woman who was firstly nominally recognised as ruler of Shiraz when a child and who then acquired the capacity to rule properly as she got older. However, it seems that she struggled to push her own political agenda for the region because Shiraz had been targeted by the Mongols since the time of Hülegü as a territory to be brought under their direct control. The memory of Abesh Khatun's reign and the destiny of the Salghurid dynasty was expressed by the historian Mustawfi, writing a few decades after the events, in the following terms:

> [Abesh] reigned for a year over Fars, after which she was given in marriage to Möngke Temür the son of Hülegü Khan and Fars passed directly under the control of the Mongols, though Ābesh continued to be the nominal ruler for nearly 20 years.[169]

During the reign of Geikhatu, the abovementioned Kurdujin, the daughter of Abesh, was appointed queen of Shiraz but denied control of the province of Fars. It seems that this was a strategy to maintain the *apparences extérieurs* of Salghurid power whilst putting taxes and the revenues of the province under the direct control of Mongol representatives.[170] At the same time, Kurdujin's appointment could have served the new Ilkhan as a way of keeping her away from the struggle that Padshah Khatun was having in Kerman with Kurdujin's husband Soyurghatmish. Finally, after the revolt of the amirs in 1319, the Ilkhan Abu Saᶜid appointed Kurdujin once again in Shiraz and she was succeeded by her niece Sultan Khatun shortly after her death.[171] However, their political power was limited to the city and their rule seems to have been more symbolic than political in character. Thus, after Abesh, the institution of female regency in Fars ceased to exist and female descendants of these women remained influential without being recognised as named rulers beyond the city of Shiraz.[172] The process of acculturation among the Mongols with regard to female rule seems to have spread in a north–south direction and, as the more southerly provinces fell

under their control the Mongol rulers became increasingly dependent on their Persian subordinates. Sporadic reactions against this tendency seem to have occurred in the fourteenth century in highly nomadic areas of Iran such as Luristan, but, as was the case with Sati Beg, they were short-lived and encountered direct opposition from the post-1295 royal *ordo*.[173]

Political intervention in Anatolia and the Caucasus

Apart from southern and south-western Iran, other regions of the Middle East became subject to Mongol rule after the arrival of Hülegü in Iran. Prior to the Mongol conquest, Anatolia had close political, diplomatic and economic relationships with the Christian kingdoms of the southern Caucasus.[174] The kingdom of Georgia, like the Ayyubid dynasty in Syria and Egypt, saw the rise of female rule in the period between the two Mongol invasions of the Middle East. Queen Rusudan (r. 1223–45) seems to have been a courageous woman who assumed control of the realm when her brother died and her nephew was still a minor.[175] She ruled for a long period but at a very early stage in her reign had to deal with the invasion of Sultan Jalal al-Din of Khwarazm who, under pressure from the Mongols in the east, was being forced westwards.[176] After the Mongol conquest, both Armenia and Georgia continued to play a role in the political balance of the Middle East. However, the importance of these two Christian kingdoms progressively declined and no further women assumed control of these realms. Nevertheless, some cases of political intermarriage between Armenian women and Persian notables under Mongol rule have been recorded, although their intervention in state affairs is not documented as it is in the case of Turko-Mongol women.[177]

At this time, Anatolia was under the rule of a local Saljuq dynasty that had progressively expanded its control over Anatolia from the late twelfth century and reached its peak in the first half of the thirteenth century under the rule of Sultan ᶜAlaᵓ al-Din Kayqubad I (r. 1220–37). Unfortunately for Saljuq aspirations, the region was invaded in 1243 when the Mongols defeated the Sultan at the battle of Köse Dagh and ultimately incorporated the peninsula into the Mongol area of influence.[178] A Mongol *noyan* from the Jochid (Golden Horde) branch of the Mongol royal family named Baiju was placed in charge of the area in 1255.[179] Disagreements rapidly grew between the Mongols of the Ilkhanate and those of the Golden Horde over the control of Anatolia when Hülegü assumed control of the Ilkhanate in 1260. Baiju's affiliation with the Mongols of Russia made him an unreliable commander in Hülegü's eyes. After his participation in the sacking of Baghdad and the campaign in Syria in 1260, Baiju was eliminated and

many of the Golden Horde Mongols were forced to leave Anatolia and seek refuge in Mamluk Egypt.[180] A puppet sultanate was established in the region, which was constantly under surveillance by various Mongol generals. Typically, the Ilkhan would control the succession of Saljuq sultans in Anatolia, not without turmoil and upheaval, until the Saljuqs vanished into thin air in 1308.[181]

Ever since the Mongols had defeated the Saljuqs of Rum at the Battle of Köge Dagh in 1243, and especially since Hülegü's advance into Iran in the 1250s, Anatolia had become an area of dispute between the Jochid Mongols (of the Golden Horde) and the Ilkhans of Iran. The Mongols of the Golden Horde had maintained a strong interest and influence in the region throughout the thirteenth century, with Saljuq sultans such as ᶜIzz al-Din Kaykaus II (d. 1280) being exiled to Mongol-dominated Crimea and marrying a Mongol *khātūn* of the Golden Horde. This woman, named Urbay Khatun, was the daughter of Berke Khan (d. 1266) and the marriage served to consolidate the support of the Mongols of Russia for ᶜIzz al-Din's line of succession among the unstable Saljuq dynasty of Rum in the second half of the thirteenth century.[182] However, following the establishment of the Ilkhanate in 1260, the Saljuq domains were integrated into the Ilkhanid area of influence and, from this moment onwards, intervention by Mongol women into the affairs of Anatolia began to emerge. One particular story is mentioned by Rashid al-Din, who claims that Sultan Rukn al-Din (r. 1248–65) was taken to Hülegü's court to respond to questions about the 'inattention' paid by his predecessor to the Mongol general Baiju. The Turkic sultan paid homage to the Mongol Ilkhan, but was pardoned only after Doquz Khatun interceded with her husband and extended her protection to the local ruler of Anatolia.[183] While Saljuq sultans were brought to Iran to submit to the Ilkhans and were being protected by the *khātūns*, Mongol men and women had also been migrating to the Anatolian peninsula since the establishment of the Ilkhanate for a variety of reasons. For example, in 1271, Ajai, son of Hülegü, was sent by Abaqa with 3,000 troops to suppress a rebellion and another brother of the Ilkhan, Qonqurtai, followed some time later with the same purpose.[184] Generally speaking, there was an increase in Mongol control over Anatolia during Abaqa's reign in order to counteract the influence of the Golden Horde and the Mamluks in the region.

Among the Saljuqs of Rum, Turkic women had their own share of political authority and influenced the decision-making of the male rulers in different periods of Mongol-dominated Anatolia.[185] For example, after the death of her husband, the wife of Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Kaykhusraw III (d. 1284) convinced the new Ilkhan that he should newly divide the Sultanate of Rum among her young children.[186] The episode occurred in the context

of the accession of Arghun to the throne after the Ilkhanid civil war between him and his uncle Tegüder Ahmad. Arghun tried to implement a policy of 'divide and rule' to obtain a more direct involvement in Anatolia.[187] The intervention of this Turkish woman is in line with patterns of political intervention seen commonly among Mongol women. She had to face the opposition of Masᶜud and for that reason she sought the support of the Turkomans, who were in constant rebellion against both Mongol and Saljuq authority.[188] The political gamble backfired on the princess, who had to face opposition in Konya with regard to this 'dangerous' alliance.[189] Masᶜud had not given up his aspirations to the throne and the woman decided to go to the Mongol camp in Iran to reassert her position. She died only a few days after leaving for Konya to take her sons out of the Sultan's control.[190]

Thus, the plan of Kaykhusraw's wife was short-lived. In order to tighten control over the region, Arghun sent his brother Geikhatu to Anatolia where he acted as Mongol governor in the company of his wife Padshah Khatun. Masᶜud was appointed Sultan of Rum under the patronage of the Mongols in c. 1285.[191] In order to tighten their control over the region, the Mongols arranged the usual marriage alliances between Mongol women and local leaders. Therefore, Arghun sent the same Urbay Khatun, daughter of Berke, to marry Masᶜud and by this means ensured that there were 'trustful eyes' watching over the Turkish sultan.[192] In the new succession crisis that followed Arghun's death in 1291, conflict arose between Geikhatu and Baidu. Anatolian subjects of the Mongols supported the former, while the latter secured the support of the eastern provinces of the Ilkhanate. Although the new Ilkhan was received with joy in the region, his military campaign against Konya and the subsequent political turmoil that the realm underwent under Geikhatu changed the relationship between the Sultanate of Rum and the Mongol central government.[193] After Geikhatu (d. 1295), Anatolia's relationship with the Mongols changed, although its economic and symbolic importance did not diminish. With the accession of Ghazan Khan there was greater central control over the peninsula, triggered by some years of rebellion that lasted until 1298.[194] It is interesting that during this period the local dynasties of Kerman, Yazd and, to some extent, Fars, were brought to an end around 1304, and from then on the Mongols exercised more direct rule over the provinces.[195] Once again, the period coincided with the disappearance of direct female intervention in political affairs, and information about the province is limited to lists of names that succeeded to the throne with restricted influence over the wider political scene of Mongol Iran. Finally, under Abu Saᶜid, there was a new division of the territory as part of the reorganisation carried out by the Ilkhan after the revolt of the amirs in 1319.[196]

There is not much information regarding Mongol women intervening in the political life of Anatolia during the Ilkhanid domination. Nor did Anatolian women acquire the same significance in the politics of the Ilkhanate as the women from Fars or Kerman had done. Rather, it appears that Mongol women were more prominent in other areas of Anatolian life such as religion and patronage of buildings, as we see in Chapter 5. Despite this, Saljuq women had a prominent role in the politics of the peninsula and its political development. Perhaps this is not the place to go deeper into this subject, but only to acknowledge the fact that many of the features of female intervention into politics among the Mongols could be also observed in the court of the Saljuqs of Rum, such as their occasional role as kingmakers, their influence in the succession to the crown and their role as advisors of male rulers. Yet, no woman was ever enthroned in Anatolia or acted as regent for the Sultans of Rum, who seem to have reserved the legitimation of rule solely for the hands of men.

Notes

1. ᶜAbd Allah ibn Fazl Allah Vassaf, *Taḥrīr-i tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, ed. ᶜA. M. Ayati (Tehran, 2004) (hereafter, *TV*), p. 323. On the migration, see J. M. Smith, 'High Living and Heartbreak on the Road to Baghdad', in L. Komaroff (ed.), *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 131–3.
2. C. J. Halperin, 'Russia in the Mongol Empire in Comparative Perspective', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 43 (1983), p. 259.
3. A. M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, trans. J. Crookenden (Madison, 1994), p. 242.
4. M. Rossabi, 'Khubilai Khan and the Women in his Family', in W. Bauer (ed.), *Studia Sino-Mongolica: Festschrift Fur Herbert Franke* (Wiesbaden, 1979), p. 160.
5. P. Jackson, 'Dissolution of the Mongol Empire', *Central Asiatic Journal* 22 (1978), pp. 186–244; D. O. Morgan, 'The Decline and Fall of the Mongol Empire', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 19:4 (2009), pp. 1–11.
6. Namely, the cases of Orghina for Central Asia and Boraqchin for Russia mentioned in Chapter 2. On China, see G. Q. Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy and Cultural Expression: Mongolian Royal Marriages from World Empire to Yuan Dynasty* (New York, 2008), pp. 64–91; on the Golden Horde, see B. Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde: Die Mongolen in Russland 1223–1502* (Leipzig, 1943), pp. 10–185.
7. K. Quade-Reutter, '"Denn Sie Haben Einen Unvollkommenen Verstand" – Herrschaftliche Damen Im Grossraum Iran in Der Mongolen – Und Timuridenzeit (ca. 1250–1507)', doctoral dissertation (Albert-Ludwig Universität, Freiburg, 2003).
8. Quade-Reutter, 'Denn Sie Haben', pp. 9–15.

9. T. T. Allsen, 'Changing Forms of Legitimation in Mongol Iran', in G. Seaman and D. Marks (eds), *Rulers from the Steppe: State Formation on the Eurasian Periphery* (Los Angeles, 1991), pp. 233–4.
10. Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Jāmi*ᶜ *al-tawārīkh*, ed. M. Rawshan and M. Mūsavī, 4 vols (Tehran, 1373/1994) (hereafter, *JT*), I, pp. 118, 361/*Jami*ᶜ*u't-tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*, ed. S. S. Kuru and trans. W. M. Thackston, 3 vols (Boston, 1998) (hereafter, Thackston), pp. 64, 175. The role of Doquz Khatun as chief wife of Hulegu and her previous marriage to Tolui has been recently questioned by S. Shir, 'The "Chief Wife" at the Courts of the Mongol Khans during the Mongol World Empire (1206–1260)', MA dissertation (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2006); see also Y. Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship: Conversion and Sovereignty in Mongol Iran', PhD dissertation (University of Michigan, 2016), ch. 1.
11. For a brief biography of Doquz Khatun, see C. Melville, 'Dokuz (Doquz) Kātūn', *EIr*. See also G. Lane, *Daily Life in the Mongol Empire* (Westport and London, 2006), pp. 243–4; D. M. Dunlop, 'Keraits of Eastern Asia', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 11:2 (1944), pp. 276–89.
12. Dunlop, 'Keraits of Eastern Asia', pp. 276–89.
13. T. T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 30.
14. *JT*, II, p. 963/Thackston, p. 471. This fact is also mentioned by S. Bayani, *Zan dar Irān-i* ᶜ*aṣr-i Mughūl* (Tehran, 1974), p. 34.
15. *JT*, II, p. 977/Thackston, p. 479.
16. Hülegü had at least sixteen wives and concubines and so many sons, but none of them from Doquz Khatun. See Fakhr al-Din Banakati, *'Tārīkh-i Banākatī': A General History from the Earliest Times to the 14th Century A.D.*, ed. J. Sheᶜar (Tehran, 1378/2000) (hereafter, *TB*), p. 412; L. J. Ward, '*Zafarnāmah* of Mustawfī', doctoral dissertation (Manchester University, 1983) (hereafter, *ZM*), pp. 206–7; *JT*, II, pp. 963–4; R. Amitai, 'Hülegü and the Ayyûbid Lord of Transjordan (More on the Mongol Governor of Al-Karak)', *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 9 (1995–7), pp. 12–13.
17. The Arabic term *amān* refers to a guarantee of safekeeping (Amitai, 'Hülegü and the Ayyûbid Lord', pp. 12–13).
18. See Chapter 5 for information about Doquz's involvement in religious affairs.
19. *JT*, II, p. 1059/Thackston, p. 517. In Persian it reads: هولاگو تو را در حال حیات ولیّ العهد کرده.
20. *JT*, II, p. 964. Mustawfi does not mention her in his *Zafarnamah* among the wives of Hülegü. See *ZM*, pp. 206–7. Following Rashid's description of the *khātūn*, she is mentioned in the first place in *Mu*ᶜ*izz al-ansab*, Bibliothèque nationale, ancient fonds, Persian, Paris, ms. 67, in the folio opening the section on the wives and amirs of Hülegü.
21. J. A. Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khans', in J. A.

Boyle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran,* vol. V (Cambridge, 1968), p. 349.

22. On the diplomatic exchanges between the Mamluks and the Golden Horde against the Ilkhanate, see S. F. Sadeque, *Baybars I of Egypt* (Dhaka, 1956), p. 113; P. M. Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy, 1260–1290: Treaties of Baybars and Qalawun with Christian Rulers* (Leiden and New York, 1995), pp. 24–8.
23. On the political history of Iran during Abaqa's reign, see Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History', pp. 355–64; P. Jackson, *Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (Harlow and New York, 2005), pp. 167–8.
24. On Tegüder's reign and his conversion, see R. Amitai, 'The Conversion of Tegüder Ilkhan to Islam', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 (2001), pp. 15–43.
25. The name appears in Persian sources in different forms such as قوتی or قوتوی. In order to avoid confusion, we will follow Boyle's transliteration of the name as 'Qutui'.
26. *JT*, II, p. 1064/Thackston, p. 519.
27. *JT*, II, p. 1064/Thackston, p. 519.
28. *ZM*, pp. 206–7/*JT*, II, p. 1130/Thackston, p. 551.
29. Mother of Möngke Temür, son of Hülegü.
30. Mubarak Shah, youngest son of the caliph, was given to her and she sent him to Nasir al-Din Tusi in Maragha, where he married a Mongol woman and had two sons. *JT*, II, p. 1018/Thackston, p. 499. She was also in close contact with the *ṣāḥib dīvān* in Hülegü's court, whom 'she rescued from disaster'. See *JT*, II, p. 1113/Thackston, p. 543.
31. According to Broadbridge there is an element of tribal rivalry in this struggle between members of the Qonqirat and Oyrat people, whose interests in the Ilkhanate would be respectively represented by Qutui Khatun and Öljei Khatun. See A. F. Broadbridge, 'Marriage, Family and Politics: The Ilkhanid-Oirat Connection' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26:1–2 (2016), pp. 127–32.
32. A much more straightforward explanation is given by Vassaf, who does not explain the disagreement, but claims that all the amirs and nobles (امرا و شاهزاد) agreed to place Tegüder on the throne. See *TV*, p. 68.
33. *JT*, II, p. 1125/Thackston, p. 548. It is interesting that Rashid should say that at this point Qutui was in favour of Arghun in his bid for the throne, a claim that would seem to contradict the role she played as *khātūn* during Tegüder's reign. *JT*, II, p. 1125/Thackston, p. 548.
34. *JT*, II, p. 1126/Thackston, p. 549; *TV*, p. 68.
35. For an analysis of the letter sent by Hülegü, see A. Allouche, 'Teguder's Ultimatum to Qalawun', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 22:4 (1990), pp. 437–46. R. Amitai, *Holy War and Rapprochement: Studies in the Relations between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Mongol Ilkhanate (1260–1335)* (Turnhout, 2013), pp. 51–2.

36. A. F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge and New York, 2008), p. 40.
37. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, pp. 41–3.
38. R. Amitai, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk–Īlkhānid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 208; R. Amitai, 'The Resolution of the Mongol–Mamluk War', in R. Amitai and M. Biran (eds), *Mongols, Turks and Others* (Leiden and Boston, 2005), p. 360. On Ghazan's successive military campaigns against the Mamluks, see Musa ibn Muhammad al-Yunini, *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: al-Yūnīnī's 'Dhayl Mirʾāt al-Zamān'*, ed. and trans. L. Guo, 2 vols (Leiden, 1998), I, pp. 97–207. A more durable peace between the Ilkhanate and the Sultanate of Egypt would not be fully implemented until the reign of Abu Saᶜid (r. 1317–35). See R. Amitai, 'Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition: A View from the Mamluk Sultanate', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 59:1 (1996), pp. 8–9. On the campaigns, see R. Amitai, 'The Logistics of the Mongol–Mamlūk War, with Special Reference to the Battle of Wādī ʾL-Khaznardār, 1299 CE', in J. H. Pryor (ed.) *Logistics of Warfare in the Age of the Crusades: Proceedings of a Workshop Held at the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Sydney* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 25–42; Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History', pp. 386–95; R. Irwin, *Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1382* (London, 1986), p. 119.
39. *JT*, II, pp. 1129–30/Thackston, p. 551.
40. *JT*, II, p. 1129/Thackston, p. 550.
41. *JT*, II, p. 1141/Thackston, p. 556.
42. Son of Abaqa and a concubine called Qaitmish Egachi, about whom we know little.
43. *JT*, II, p. 1129/Thackston, p. 550. Actually, this woman was a granddaughter of Hülegü; see *JT*, II, p. 966/Thackston, p. 474.
44. *JT*, II, p. 1127/Thackston, p. 549. By receiving a daughter of Tegüder (Kuchuk), the Kerait Alinaq replaced Qonqurtai as Tegüder's 'right hand'. See *JT*, II, p. 1134/Thackston, p. 553.
45. *JT*, pp. 1171–2/Thackston, p. 571.
46. For example, Lagzi, son of the influential amir Arghun Aqa, his wife Baba Khatun, daughter of Hülegü and Öljei Khatun and one of Arghun Aqa's wives. *JT*, II, p. 1140/Thackston, p. 556. It is interesting that Baba Khatun (also Mama Khatun) was the daughter of Öljei and Hülegü and therefore was forced to join her husband against the interests of her mother. On her, see *JT*, II, p. 972/Thackston, p. 476. On her family connections up to the reign of Abu Saᶜid, see Abu al-Qasim ᶜAbd Allah ibn ᶜAli Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Ūljāytū*, ed. M. Hambly (Tehran, 1384/2005) (hereafter, *TU*), p. 7.
47. *JT*, II, p. 1140/Thackston, p. 556.
48. *JT*, II, p. 1141/Thackston, p. 556.
49. See *JT*, I, p. 181/Thackston, p. 97. This lady was also highly appreciated by

Tegüder Ahmad, which suggests that her influence went beyond the supporters of her husband; see *TV*, p. 77. On the name itself, see C. Melville, 'Bologān (Būlūgān) Kātun', *EIr*.

50. Since Bulughan was a former wife of Abaqa, that might have granted her enough prestige to be considered to accompany her new husband Arghun to Teguder's court and to be in charge of the banquet. On the relevance of this woman in military affairs, see B. De Nicola, 'Women's Role and Participation in Warfare in the Mongol Empire', in K. Latzel, S. Satjukow and F. Maubach (eds), *Soldatinnen: Gewalt und Geschlecht im Krieg vom Mittelalter bis Heute* (Paderborn, 2010), pp. 95–112.
51. *JT*, II, p. 1144/Thackston, p. 557.
52. Ghiyath al-Din Khwandamir, *Tārīkh-i ḥabīb al-siyar*, 4 vols (Tehran, 1333/1954) (hereafter, *THS*), III, p. 124/Ghiyath al-Din Khwandamir, *'Habibu's-Siyar': The Reign of the Mongol and the Turk*, trans. W. M. Thackston, vol. III (Cambridge, MA, 1994) (hereafter, Khwandamir), p. 70. In this source the name of Qutui appears as 'Qutet' (قوتت).
53. The Qara'unas were a Mongol group that dwelt in Afghanistan and Central Asia and were close to the Chaghataids in this period. For the term 'Qara'una' and its use in the sources, see P. Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: a Political and Military History* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 328; *JT*, II, p. 1147/Thackston, p. 559. Todai and Armini were both of the Qonqirat people and wives of Tegüder Ahmad. Their execution suggests a potential threat that powerful women represented for rival factions. Armini Khatun seems to have been another influential woman during Tegüder's reign. She is mentioned as giving refuge and protection to the Persian sahib Shams al-Din during this period. See *JT*, II, p. 1127/Thackston, p. 549.
54. Shirazi, Qutb al-Din Mahmud ibn Mas[c]ud, *Akhbār-i Mughūlān (650–683) dar anbānah-ʾi Mullā Quṭb* (Qom, 2010), p. 65.
55. Melville, 'Bologān (Būlūgān) Kātun', *EIr*.
56. *JT*, II, p. 1237/Thackston, p. 606. She died in 1296, and is also famous because she is the Mongol princess that Marco Polo accompanied from China on his way back to Europe in the thirteenth century. See M. Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian: Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*, trans. H. Yule, 2 vols (London, 1903), I, p. 32.
57. For example, Padshah Khatun, who will be referred to later in this chapter.
58. She was a Kerait Christian, mother of Öljeitü Ilkhan (r. 1304–16), a direct descendant of the Ong Khan and a niece of Doquz Khatun. Rashid al-Din Tabib, *The Successors of Genghis Khan,* trans. J. A. Boyle (New York and London, 1971) (hereafter, *Successors*), pp. 25–6, fn. 68.
59. *JT*, II, p. 1184/Thackston, p. 576.
60. For a description of the factions see *TU*, p. 7; *JT*, II, pp. 1182–4/Thackston, p. 576; J. Aubin, *Émirs mongols et vizirs persanes dans les remous de l'acculturation* (Paris, 1995), pp. 45–6.

61. A. Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia: Aspects of Administrative, Economic and Social History* (New York, 1988), p. 250; Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship', ch. 1.
62. S. Kamola, 'The Making of History in Mongol Iran', doctoral dissertation (University of Washington, 2013), p. 88; Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship', ch. 1.
63. Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History', p. 373.
64. *JT*, II, p. 1192/Thackston, p. 581.
65. *JT*, II, p. 1192/Thackston, p. 581.
66. *TU*, pp. 7–8.
67. See, for example, the case of Qutlughshah Khatun in *ZM*, pp. 637–8. Abu Sa^{c}id was the son of Haji Khatun; see *TU*, p. 44.
68. Morgan, 'Decline and Fall', pp. 1–11; C. Melville, 'The End of the Ilkhanate and After: Observations on the Collapse of the Mongol World Empire', in B. De Nicola and C. Melville (eds), *The Mongols' Middle East: Continuity and Transformation in Ilkhanid Iran* (Leiden, 2016), pp. 309–35.
69. *ZM*, pp. 618–9.
70. Abu Sa^{c}id's mother was Haji Khatun, daughter of the influential general Tanggiz and Todogach (daughter of Hülegü). See *TU*, p. 7; Hafiz-i Abru, *Chronique des rois mongols en Iran*, ed. and trans. K. Bayani, 2 vols (Paris, 1936) (hereafter, HAB), p. 50, fn. 4.
71. C. Melville, 'Čobān', *EIr*.
72. Khwaju Kirmani, *Dīvān-i Ash^{c}ār* (Tehran, 1957), p. 6 (hereafter, *DA*).
73. He was married first to Dulandi Khatun and, after her death, to her sister Sati Beg. See Hafiz-i Abru, *Ẓayl-i Jāmi^{c} al-tawārīkh-i Rashīdī: shāmil-i vaqāʾi^{c}-i 703–781 hijrī-i qamarī*, ed. K. Bayani (Tehran, 1350/1971) (hereafter, HA), p. 71/HAB, p. 50. Chopan later married Kurdujin Beki Khatun. See HAB, pp. 105–6.
74. The best study of the conflict between Chopan and the opposing amirs can be found in C. Melville, *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Il-Khanate, 1327–1337: A Decade of Discord in Mongol Iran* (Bloomington, 1999).
75. Mustawfi dedicates an entire chapter of his *Zafarnamah* to Abu Sa^{c}id's obsession with Chopan's daughter, Baghdad Khatun. *ZM*, pp. 648–9. See also HA, p. 117/HAB, p. 91.
76. Abu Sa^{c}id quoted the *yasa* to claim Baghdad Khatun and annul her marriage to Shaykh Hasan; see HAB, p. 117. It is interesting that this appeal to Mongol traditional law should come at this late stage in the history of the Mongols in Iran. It highlights on the one hand that, despite their Muslim names, Mongol rulers still felt 'Mongol', but that, on the other hand, Chopan's disregard for this law denotes a high degree of acculturation, with the *yasa* having lost most of its sacred status among Mongol members of the government such as Chopan. See the reaction of Chopan in *ZM*, p. 649. For the story, see Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History', p. 410.

77. Melville, *Fall of Amir Chupan*, p. 29.
78. H. Gilli-Elewy, 'On Women, Power, and Politics during the Last Phase of the Ilkhanate', *Arabica* 59 (2012), pp. 709–23.
79. HA, p. 142/HAB, p. 108.
80. See Melville, *Fall of Amir Chupan*, p. 24. Melville found the story not only mentioned in HA p. 131/HAB, p. 103, but also in other Mamluk sources.
81. HA, p. 142/HAB, p. 108. The event is also mentioned in *ZM*, p. 669.
82. *ZM*, p. 666.
83. HA, p. 144/HAB, p. 110.
84. Aubin, *Émirs mongols*, p. 85
85. HA, p. 146/HAB, pp. 112–3. Baghdad Khatun's alleged assassination of Abu Sa^{c}id is seen by Soudavar as connected to the illustration of the scene of the poisoning of Ardashir by his wife in manuscript illlustrations of the Shahnamah of Firdawsi in the fourteenth century. See A. Soudavar, 'The Saga of Abu-Sa'id Bahādor Khān. The Abu-Sa'idnāmé', in J. Raby and T. Fitzherbert, *The court of the Il-khans, 1290–1340* (Oxford, 1998), p. 157. On the illustration, see Plate 4.
86. Although a Toluid, Arpa came from the line of Ariq Böke, the brother of Hülegü, and was described as a 'Mongol of the old school'. See Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History', p. 413; HA, p. 145/HAB, p. 111. The death of Baghdad Khatun is mentioned in Shabankara'i, *Majma^c al-ansāb*, ed. H. Muhaddith (Tehran, 1363/1984) (hereafter, *MA*), p. 299.
87. HA, p. 147/HAB, p. 113; *MA*, p. 299. Shabankara'i gives an account of Arpa being approached by Amir Sharaf al-Din Mahmud Shah together with Abu Sa^{c}id's mother (Haji) and sister (Sati Beg). They propose that he, Arpa, assume the throne. This same amir is considered a liar by Shabankara'i, who accuses him of saying that Abu Sa^{c}id had named Arpa as successor when, according to Shabankara'i, the sultan had never said this. *MA*, pp. 293–4.
88. According to some accounts, ^{c}Ali Padshah started to present himself as a fervent Muslim to gain the support of the Oyrat amirs of the 'Arab countries' for a revolt against Arpa. See HA, p. 148/HAB, p. 115.
89. For details about this period, see B. Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran: Politik, Verwaltung und Kultur der Ilchanzeit 1220–1350* (Leiden, 1985), pp. 107–15.
90. Shaykh Hasan 'Bozorg' was the son of Amir Husain Jalayir and Oljatay Khatun (daughter of Arghun Ilkhan). He was the founder of the Jalayir dynasty of Iran and Iraq, which ruled for the period 336–1356. See *JT*, p. 1153/Thackston, p. 562; *TU*, p. 8; H. R. Roemer, 'The Jalayirids, Muzaffarids and Sabardārs', in P. Jackson and L. Lockhart (eds), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VI, (Cambridge, 1986), p. 5. His new antagonist was another shaykh, Hasan Kuchek, the son of Temür-Tash and the grandson of Chopan. He was also the stepson of Sati Beg. He died in 1343 when 'two or three women killed him by squeezing his tes-

ticles', which inspired a poem by Salman Sawadji. See *THS*, III, p. 231/ Khwandamir, p. 132.

91. She was the daughter of Öljeitü, the sister of Abu Sa^{c}id, and was married to Amir Chopan. See *TU*, p. 7/HA, p. 71/HAB, p. 50/*DA*, p. 6.
92. Mamluk sources mention that ^{c}Ali Padshah gave shelter to the pregnant wife of Abu Sa^{c}id called Dilshad Khatun and proclaimed that her child 'would be Sultan, whether it turned out to be male or female'. See Melville, *Fall of Amir Chupan*, p. 46.
93. The reference to the coins, which read السلطانة العادلة ساتی بک خان خلدالله ملکها, and to her name being pronounced in the *khuṭba* can be found in B. Üçok, *Femmes turques souverraines et regents dans les états islamiques*, trans. A. Çamali (n. d.), p. 116. See also F. Mernissi, *Forgotten Queens of Islam* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 105; S. Album, 'Studies in Ilkhanid History and Numismatics II: A Late Ilkhanid Hoard (741/1340)', *Studia Iranica* 14:1 (1985), pp. 43–76.
94. For example, the 'History of Shaikh Uwais' dedicates a section to her reign, but she is not credited with participating in any of the events narrated. See Abu Bakr al-Qutbi Ahri, *Taʾrikh-i Shaikh Uwais (History of Shaikh Uwais) an Important Source for the History of Adharbaijān in the Fourteenth Century*, trans. J. B. van Loon (The Hague, 1954), pp. 67–8, 166–7.
95. HA, p. 160/HAB, pp. 128–9.
96. *THS*, III, p. 228/Khwandamir, p. 131; HA, p. 162/HAB, p. 130.
97. It is worth mentioning here that in other aspects of Mongol life in Iran, Persianisation seems to have been less significant. See, for example, the analysis on the *Keshig* (Imperial Guard) in C. Melville, 'The Keshig in Iran: The Survival of the Royal Mongol Household', in L. Komaroff (ed.), *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 135–64.
98. D. Aigle, 'Iran under Mongol Domination: The Effectiveness and Failings of a Dual Administrative System', *Bulletin d'études orientales* 57:2 (2008), p. 74.
99. ^{c}Alaʾ al-Din ^{c}Ata Malik Juvayni, *Tārīkh-i jahān-gushā*, ed. M. Qazvini, 3 vols (Leiden and London, 1912–37) (hereafter, *TJG*), II, pp. 210–12/ Juvayni, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, trans. J. A. Boyle, 2 vols (Manchester, 1958; reprint 1997 with foreword by D. O. Morgan) (hereafter, Boyle), pp. 476–7.
100. For an account of Baraq Hajeb's daughters, see *MA*, p. 196.
101. Anonymous, *Tārīkh-i Shāhī-yi Qarā-Khitāʾiyān*, ed. M. I. Bastani Parizi (Tehran, 1976–7) (hereafter, *TSQ*), pp. 107–8; Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 279.
102. Nasir al-Din Munshi Kirmani, *Simṭ al-ulā lil-Ḥaẓrat al-^{c}ulyā dar 'Tārīkh-i Qarā-khitāʾīyān-i Kirmān'*, ed. ^{c}A. Iqbal (Tehran, 1362/1983–4) (hereafter, *SU*), p. 41; *JT*, II, p. 934/*Successors*, p. 305; *ZM*, p. 209.
103. *TV*, p. 165.
104. Üçok regards Hejaj as a stepson (*beau-fils*) of Terken; see Üçok, *Femmes*

turques, p. 66. However, Persian sources describe Hejaj as a son of the queen; see Hamd Allah Mustawfi Qazvini, *The 'Ta'rikh-i-Guzida': or 'Select History' of Hamduʾllah Mustawfí-i-Qazwini*, ed. and trans. E. G. Browne, 2 vols (Leiden and London, 1910–13) (hereafter, *TG*), II, p. 132; *MA*, 199; *TSQ*, p. 315.

105. *MA*, pp. 198–9.
106. See above.
107. *TSQ*, pp. 106–7; see also *SU*, p. 38.
108. Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, pp. 279–80.
109. For example, by marrying her daughter Padshah Khatun to the Ilkhan Abaqa, see below.
110. *TSQ*, pp. 182–4.
111. The marriage seems to have taken place in 1271–2; see Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 281; *TSQ*, pp. 139–40; Üçok, *Femmes turques*, p. 73.
112. *JT*, II, p. 1079/Thackston, p. 527. On the consequences of Abaqa's victory for the Mongols in Central Asia, see M. Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of an Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* (Richmond, 1997), pp. 31–3.
113. *THS*, III, p. 268/Khwandamir, p. 155.
114. See Hamd Allah Mustawfi Qazvini, *Tārīkh-i guzīda*, ed. A. Navaʾi (Tehran, 1960), vol. I, p. 531. See also *SU*, p. 47; *MA*, p. 199.
115. *SU*, p. 48; *TSQ*, p. 261; *TB*, p. 425; *TV*, p. 166.
116. *JT*, II, p. 934/*Successors*, p. 305.
117. See Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 281.
118. According to *MA*, p. 199, he died ten years after exile; other authors mention that he remained in India for fifteen years. See *JT*, II, p. 934/*Successors*, p. 305; *TG*, I, p. 531; *TG*, II, p. 133; *THS*, III, p. 269/Khwandamir, p. 155; *TSQ*, p. 315.
119. *JT*, II, pp. 934–5/*Successors*, pp. 305–6. A very flattering account of her life is the *TSQ* in which her sense of justice is praised several times. See, for example, *TSQ*, p. 96, which opens its account of Terken by mentioning that she was called the 'lawful *khātūn*' (حلال خاتون).
120. *SU*, p. 51.
121. *MA*, p. 200; *THS*, III, p. 269/Khwandamir, p. 155.
122. *TSQ*, pp. 57–8, from the introduction. See also Üçok, *Femmes turques*, p. 68; *MA*, p. 200.
123. Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 282; Aubin, *Émirs mongols*, pp. 34–5.
124. On Shams al-Din, see B. Spuler, 'Djuwaynī', *EI2*; for him and his family, see G. Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance* (London and New York, 2003), pp. 177–212.
125. She probably died in June or July of that year. See Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 154. She was buried in Tabriz but then brought to Kerman by her daughter Bibi Terken to be buried in a mosque; *THS*, III, p. 269/Khwandamir, p. 155.

126. The issue would not be solved until 1295 when Ghazan Khan was appointed Ilkhan. See this chapter's final remarks.
127. A small account of Bibi Terken's life can be found in Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, pp. 283–5; *THS*, III, p. 269/Khwandamir, p. 155.
128. In *MA*, p. 200, it is mentioned that Padshah Khatun tried to kill Soyurghatmish.
129. Möngke Temür was the son of Öljei Khatun, who was the woman who opposed Qutui during Tegüder's reign.
130. *MA*, p. 200.
131. On *injü*, see Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 78; this seems to have been a diplomatic success for Bibi Terken; it also helped Arghun to balance Soyurghatmish's power in the region; Aubin, *Émirs mongols*, p. 41.
132. See G. Q. Zhao, 'Control through Conciliation: Royal Marriages between the Mongol Yuan and Koryŏ (Korea) during the 13th and 14th Centuries', *Toronto Studies in Central Inner Asia* 6 (2004)', pp. 20–3.
133. *MA*, p. 200; *TSQ*, p. 316; *JT*, II, p. 1155/Thackston, p. 563.
134. According to Rashid al-Din, the enthronement of Geikhatu was planned by Örüg Khatun (wife of Arghun and Geikhatu) to prevent Baidu's accession to the throne in 1291. See *JT*, II, pp. 1182–4/Thackston, p. 576.
135. *JT*, II, p. 935/*Successors*, p. 306. The execution occurred on 21 August 1294. See Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, p. 154.
136. *JT*, II, p. 935/*Successors*, p. 306.
137. *SU*, p. 76; *TV*, p. 168; *MA*, pp. 202–3.
138. *SU*, p. 76; *TG*, I, p. 537; *JT*, II, p. 935/*Successors*, p. 306.
139. His name was Muzaffar al-Din Muhammad, who died in 1303–4. See *TG*, I, pp. 533–5.
140. Qutb al-Din Shah Jahan. See *TG*, I, p. 535.
141. Several marriages are documented between the Qutlugh dynasty of Kerman and the Salghurid dynasty of Fars. For example, Lambton mentions the case of an attempt to marry Jahan Khatun bint Abu Bakr of Fars and Rukn al-Din, third ruler of Kerman. See Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 277. On the Salghurid dynasty, see B. Spuler, 'Atābakān-e Fārs', *EIr*.
142. D. Aigle, *Le Fars sous la domination mongole: politique et fiscalité, XIIIe–XIVe s.* (Paris, 2005), pp. 113–4.
143. The sister of [c]Alah al-Dawla, the *atabeg* of Yazd (see Abu al-[c]Abbas Zarkub Shirazi, *Shirāz-nāma*, ed. I. V. Javadi (Tehran, 1350/1972) (hereafter, *SRN*), p. 62), and niece of Terken Qutlugh Khatun (see *JT*, II, p. 936). I will refer to her as Turkan as a transliteration of her name, instead of Terken as she is commonly known, to avoid confusion between her and Terken Qutlugh Khatun of Kerman. It should be noted that both are generally referred as تركان in Persian sources.
144. *TV*, p. 105.
145. *SRN*, p. 62; *TG*, I, p. 508.
146. *JT*, II, p. 936/*Successors*. p. 307; *SRN*, p. 62; *TG*, I, p. 508.

147. On the Shul people, see V. Minorsky, 'S̲hūlistān', *EI2*.
148. Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 272.
149. On the one hand, *TG*, I, pp. 508–9, explains that Saljuq Shah killed Turkan, which led to her brother, the *atabeg* of Yazd, asking Hülegü for help against Saljuq Shah. The Ilkhan sent an army which eventually took Shiraz and put its ruler to death in 663/1264–5. *SRN* (p. 63) agrees, accusing Saljuq of the murder, but Lambton observes that he killed her while drunk. See Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 272; Aigle, *Le Fars sous la domination mongole*, p. 119.
150. Aigle, *Le Fars sous la domination mongole*, p. 118.
151. *TV*, p. 109. Aigle, *Le Fars sous la domination mongole*, pp. 118–19.
152. See B. Spuler, 'Ābeš K̲ātūn', *EIr*. Also Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 272, fn. 88.
153. *TV*, p. 113; Aigle, *Le Fars sous la domination mongole*, p. 123.
154. *SRN*, p. 64.
155. Also Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 272.
156. *TV*, p. 113.
157. Üçok, *Femmes turques*, p. 96.
158. Probably to keep him away from central power after the opposition to Tegüder from her mother.
159. *TV*, p. 124. The appointment of Abesh was 1283–4, so Möngke Temür's death should have happened some time before that date when women were deciding the election of the new Ilkhan. According to Spuler ('Ābeš K̲ātūn', *EIr*), Möngke Temür died in April 1282. In *JT*, the death of Möngke Temür is mentioned in the context of Tegüder's coronation in 1282. See *JT*, II, p. 1125/Thackston, p. 548.
160. *SRN*, p. 68.
161. Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 272, quoting ᶜAbd Allah ibn Fazl Allah Vassaf, *Kitāb-i mustaṭāb-i Vaṣṣāf al-ḥaẓrat*, ed. M. M. Isfahani (Bombay, 1269/1853), p. 211.
162. *SRN*, p. 70; *TV*, p 121. Vassaf mentions that the position was given as remuneration for ᶜImad al-Din's victory over Buqa, one of Tegüder's allies.
163. *TV*, p. 122; Aigle, *Le Fars sous la domination mongole*, p. 133.
164. This is another indication of the role played by women in the central *ordo* prior to 1294. Aigle, *Le Fars sous la domination mongole*, p. 134.
165. *TV*, p. 122; Aigle, *Le Fars sous la domination mongole*, p. 134.
166. *JT*, II, pp. 1161–2/Thackston, pp. 565–6; *SRN*, pp. 70–1.
167. *TV*, p. 124.
168. *SRN*, pp. 70–1; *TV*, p. 125. She was buried in the Mongol fashion and her properties divided between her daughters by Möngke Temür (Kurdujin Khatun and Alghachi), her servants and a son of Möngke Temür by another woman. See Aigle, *Le Fars sous la domination mongole*, p. 135.
169. *TG*, I, p. 509; II, p. 122.
170. Aigle, *Le Fars sous la domination mongole*, p. 144.

171. Aigle, *Le Fars sous la domination mongole*, p. 158.
172. The role of Kurdujin Khatun, daughter of Abesh Khatun, in the history of Kerman has been mentioned in the section dealing with the Qutlughkhanids of Kerman.
173. See for example the case of Dawlat Khatun (دولت خاتون), who became the ruler of Luristan for a short period in 1316–7. See also *TG*, I, pp. 556–7; Üçok, *Femmes turques*, pp. 105–8. A brief account of her reign can also be found in S. Khudgu, *Atābakān-i Lur-i kūchak: tārīkh-i siyāsī-i ijtimāᶜī-i Luristān va Īlām dar ᶜahd-i Atābakān-i Lur-i kūchak* (Khurramabad, 1378/1999–2000), pp. 74–5.
174. A. Peacock, 'Georgia and the Anatolian Turks in the 12th and 13th Centuries', *Anatolian Studies* 56 (2006), pp. 127–46.
175. She seriously considered leading a crusade when the Pope demanded it. In the end it was not carried out. See C. Toumanoff, 'Armenia and Georgia', in J. M. Hussey (ed.), *The Cambridge Medieval History* (Cambridge, 1966), p. 625.
176. D. M. Lang, 'Georgia in the Reign of Giorgi the Brilliant (1314–1346)', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 17:1 (1955), p. 86. The Georgian queen Rusudan finally took poison voluntarily and the kingdom passed to a male relative. See B. Dashdondog, 'Submission to the Mongol Empire by the Armenians', *Mongolian and Tibetan Quarterly* 18:3 (2009), p. 79.
177. H. Margarian, 'Khoshak-Khatun: An Armenian Princess in Iran', *Iran and the Caucasus* 3 (1999–2000), pp. 157–8.
178. C. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: A General Survey of the Material Culture and Spiritual Culture and History, 1071–1330* (New York, 1968), pp. 135–8.
179. R. Grousset, *L'Empire des Steppes: Attila, Gengis-Khan, Tamerlan* (Paris, 1948), p. 423. On the name 'Baiju', see F. W. Cleaves, 'The Mongolian Names and Terms in the History of the Nation of the Archers by Grigor of Akanc', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 12:3/4 (December 1949), p. 413; P. Pelliot, *Les Mongols et la Papauté*, Revue de l'Orient chrétien, vol. II (1924), pp. 109–10.
180. C. Melville, 'Anatolia under the Mongols', in K. Fleet (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. I (Cambridge, 2009), p. 61.
181. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, pp. 301–3.
182. Melville, 'Anatolia under the Mongols', p. 72.
183. *JT*, II, p. 1023/Thackston, p. 501. Another similar episode of female intervention in the political life of Anatolia is recorded. An unnamed woman interceded with her husband when he decided to attack Konya. See C. Cahen, *La Turquie pré-ottomane* (Istanbul, 1988), p. 243; Melville, 'Anatolia under the Mongols', p. 56.
184. Melville, 'Anatolia under the Mongols', p. 70; *JT*, II, p. 1129/Thackston, p. 550.

185. R. Shukurov, 'Harem Christianity: The Byzantine Identity of Seljuk Princes', in A. C. S. Peacock and S. N. Yildiz (eds), *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East* (London, 2012), pp. 115–50; B. De Nicola, 'The Ladies of Rūm: A Hagiographic View on Women in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Anatolia', *Journal of Sufi Studies* 3:2 (2014), pp. 132–56; S. Redford, 'The Rape of Anatolia', in A. C. S. Peacock, B. De Nicola and S. N. Yildiz (eds), *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia* (Farnham, 2015), pp. 107–16.
186. Cahen, *La Turquie pré-ottomane*, p. 276.
187. Melville, 'Anatolia under the Mongols', p. 74.
188. On the Turkomans in Anatolia, see C. Cahen, 'Notes pour l'histoire des Turcomans d'Asie Mineure au XIII siècle', *Journal Asiatique* 239 (1951), pp. 335–54. See also D. A. Korobainikov, 'The Revolt of Kastamonu, c. 1291–1293', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 28 (2004), pp. 87–118.
189. Cahen, *La Turquie pré-ottomane*, p. 278.
190. Melville, 'Anatolia under the Mongols', p. 75.
191. *JT*, II. p. 1155.
192. Anonymous, *Tārīkh-i āl-i Saljūq dar Ānāṭūlī*, ed. N. Jalali (Tehran, 1999), pp. 119–20; Cahen, *La Turquie pré-ottomane*, p. 284; Melville, 'Anatolia under the Mongols', p. 77; Baybars al-Mansuri, *Zubdat al-fikrah fī taʾrīkh al-hijrah*, ed. D. S. Richards (Beirut, 1998), pp. 216–7. On the control of the Koryo dynasty of Korea by Yuan princesses, see Zhao, 'Control through Conciliation', pp. 3–26.
193. Melville, 'Anatolia under the Mongols', pp. 78–9.
194. Melville, 'Anatolia under the Mongols', pp. 81–2.
195. Melville, 'Anatolia under the Mongols', p. 86.
196. Melville, 'Anatolia under the Mongols', p. 90.

4

Women and the Economy of the Mongol Empire

> [T]he seizure of this *ordo* with its attached servitors, herds, tents, and equipment was surely reckoned as a substantial loss by the grandchildren of Chinggis Khan.
>
> T. T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 2001[1]

In order to make sense of the influential and outspoken role acquired by some Mongol women in the politics of the empire as seen in previous chapters, it is important to uncover if and how these ladies participated in the imperial economy. However, to write on the economic history of nomadic societies presents a number of challenges marked by the lack of documents generally associated with the economy of empires, such as testaments, commercial treaties, notarial documents, and so on. Not having any of this type of documentation forces us to rely upon those sources we use for writing the more general history of the Mongol Empire and try to isolate from it references to the empire's economy. In the case of women in the empire, the task is even more arduous, since the information regarding their activity is arguably even slimmer than what we have for men. In order to bypass this methodological issue, this chapter mostly focuses on one fundamental element in the life of the Mongol nomads: the *ordo*. Due to the *ordo*'s centrality in the economic life of the Mongol Empire, I believe it is safe to include it among one of the Mongol institutions that helped to articulate an imperial economy in constant transformation.

The word *ordo* has been widely used by Mongolists for decades to refer to the Mongol royal encampment.[2] The Turkish term appears originally to have referred to the group of tents belonging to the elite cavalry of the khan in the middle of which stood the yurt of the ruler.[3] The Persian chroniclers used it when specifying where the king or other member of the royal family was at a certain time.[4] However, this is not to say that its precise meaning always remained constant; sometimes the sources refer to the *ordo* as a political entity (similar to the itinerant court of medieval European kingdoms) and at other times as a centre of economic and

military importance.[5] A clearer definition has been offered by Christopher Atwood, who defined the *ordo* as 'the great palace-tents and camps of the Mongol princess, princes and emperors, which served as the nucleus of their power'.[6] Thus, the *ordo* functioned not only as the nucleus of family and social life, but also as a centre of economic activity, with horses, cattle and trade being organised around it.[7] Probably because they were familiar with this nomadic institution from the Saljuq period, Persian historians were not particularly struck by the *ordos* of the Mongols.[8] In fact, it seems that *ordos* had been around in Eurasia for a considerable period by the time of the Mongol expansion. Possibly in the same way that they adopted the institution of female regency, the Mongols incorporated the *ordo* from the Liao dynasty, establishing garrisons in Mongolia while they ruled Northern China.[9]

A travelling Taoist monk from Northern China wrote the following description of an *ordo* in his account of his trip to meet Chinggis Khan in the early thirteenth century:

> We were soon inside the encampment; and here we left our waggons. On the southern bank of the river were drawn up hundreds and thousands of waggons and tents. … Ordo is the Mongol for temporary palace, and the palanquins, pavilions and other splendours of this camp would certainly have astonished the Khans of the ancient Huns.[10]

This Chinese account confirms the description given by modern historians and not only underlines the spectacular extension of the camp, but also stresses the fact that the dwelling was typical of nomadic empires of the steppes, be they Hun, Khitan or Mongol. In the thirteenth century, William of Rubruck described his encounter with Batu's encampment in the following terms: 'When I saw Batu's orda [*ordo*] I was overcome with fear, for his own houses seemed like a great city stretching out a long way and crowded round on every side by people to a distance of three or four leagues'.[11] Similarly, Ibn Battuta observed the mobility of the Mongol *ordos* on his visit to the territories of the Golden Horde in the fourteenth century. He wrote: 'On reaching the encampment they [the Mongols] took the tents off the waggons and set them upon the ground, for they were very light, and they did the same with mosques and shops'.[12] So, the *ordos* comprised not only the dwellings of the Mongols but also their places of worship and economic exchange.

In Iran, the political and economic power of successive rulers of the Ilkhanate was centred around their *ordos*.[13] Each member of the royal family, as well as other important persons, had their own *ordo* and this continued in Iran into the fourteenth century under Öljeitü (r. 1304–16).[14]

The central role of the *ordos* led to the duplication of agents and officials when local elites interacted in the court. This phenomenon is illustrated by, for example, the multiplicity of *keshigs* in the *ordos* of the Chinggisid family members in the Ilkhanate.[15] But, if the *ordo* caused a certain amount of inconvenience in the political administration of the realm, it also provided a central, yet mobile, institution of economic activity. Progressively, the *ordos* became centres for the accumulation of cattle, commodities and personal wealth. The expansion of the empire led to such enrichment of these camps that, if an *ordo* were appropriated by a candidate to the throne, it could be fundamental in tipping the balance in his favour during a succession dispute.[16]

Pivoting around this institution, in this chapter, we initially attempt to identify who among the Mongol women had an *ordo* and to provide an explanation on the structure and function of those *ordos*. Second, we look at how women accumulated wealth in their *ordos* in different periods of the Mongol Empire and how they adapted their economic activity to different moments in the history of the empire. Finally, we focus on how these *ordos* were first passed from woman to woman, and then eventually appropriated by men in fourteenth-century Iran as part of a designed political strategy during the reign of Ghazan Khan. As a whole, this chapter aims to uncover the economic position of Mongol women in the empire, how they accumulated, expanded and transmitted their wealth, and the degree of autonomy they enjoyed in disposing of the resources they had obtained during the empire's expansion.

The **Ordo***: A Nomadic Institution for Women's Economic Activity*

Studies of nomadic societies generally indicate that women were in charge of the household while men were usually committed to hunting and war.[17] As Rossabi has noted, the Mongols were a patrilineal society in which men owned most of the family wealth, which was administered at home by the women.[18] When the Mongols became richer through the accumulation of wealth garnered by conquest, the men were able to marry more women and distribute their property among them to be managed.[19] So, following this pre-imperial custom, the main wives of a ruler or male member of the royal family had their own *ordos* or appanages where property, cattle and people were accumulated and administered by women.[20]

However, Mongol women were not altogether barred from holding property. Some women did receive property from their husbands (in the form of dowries), ruled their respective *ordos* and used them to fulfil their

own political agenda.[21] If the *ordos* of the *khātūns* played a role not only in the economy, but also in the politics of the Mongol Empire, two questions arise. Who had the right to be in charge of an *ordo*? Did all women have *ordos* under their administration? The second question may be easier to answer. Sources clearly state that some women were in attendance in the *ordos* of other women and were never themselves provided with an *ordo* to administer. Consequently, it seems that only nobles and their wives had a camp under their command.[22] Regarding the first question, the situation is more complex and seems to have depended on the historical context in which women lived during the different stages of the empire's expansion. All women who were entitled to rule an *ordo* were the chief wives of the rulers or other members of the royal family; the difference resides in how they came to be *khātūns*. Mongol women increased their right to property as they went through the stages of life. Among Altaic societies in general it has been observed that when the woman is not married, her status is low and she is economically dependent on her family because 'her legal personality is of the lower order'.[23] Once she is married, she acquires control over her marriage dowry, increasing her economic status in the family household. Finally, it is when she has borne a son that she is fully entitled to dispose of property and administer not only her personal wealth but that of her minor sons in the event of the death of her husband.[24]

During the early life of Chinggis Khan – before the empire – the most precious commodities that a pastoral society could accumulate were herds and people. There is not much about the former in the sources; however, herds were attached to people and if one gained control of people then one could obtain the benefits of their cattle. As Allsen has noted, 'the political struggles that accompanied the formation of the Mongol state turned on the control of people and herds, not on land per se'.[25] Ever-increasing numbers of people were incorporated into the Mongol family and this resource was at the disposal of Mongol women. While progressively defeating his rival tribes, Chinggis Khan dispatched captives to the appanages of different members of the royal family.[26] Although sources differ as to the number of people assigned to Chinggis Khan's mother, she was included in this allocation and she received more subordinates than Chinggis Khan's sons.[27] It is interesting to note that some accounts stress the fact that Hö'elün disputed the number of subjects she received and seemed unwilling to share them with her son.[28] Chinggis Khan's wife received one thousand people, who served as her personal guards, whilst two other wives of the Mongol emperor received into their *ordos* the people allocated to them.[29]

When the empire expanded, women increased the amount of people

that came under their command and the structure of the *ordos* became more sophisticated. The massive accumulation of wealth following military expansion meant that by the 1230s, the Mongols had to implement a census to organise 'taxation, military conscription, and the identification of cultural and technical specialists'.[30] However, despite this abundance, it seems that only the main wives of a lord or military commander had a share of the wealth in their personal *ordo*. Travellers from sedentary societies that had not been in touch with Altaic pastoral people were impressed by the existence of these female camps and their organisation. In his trip to the court of Güyük (d. 1248), Carpini observed a clear division between the *ordos* of the different women in the camp of a prince: 'When a Tartar has many wives, each one has her own dwelling and her household, and the husband eats and drinks and sleeps one day with one, and the next with another'.[31] It is specifically mentioned that these *ordos* belonged to a man's wives, whilst concubines or other women in the Mongol household were deprived of a personal *ordo*. Rubruck provides a clearer picture of the construction of these individual queenly *ordos* in the Mongol court, mentioning that 'married women' themselves drive the carts when their dwellings are transported and when they are unloaded from the cart the group of tents that forms their *ordos* are distributed hierarchically from west to east in the encampment, commencing with the chief wife and followed by the others 'according to their ranks'.[32] He continues by describing how the Khan spent one night in the *ordo* of one of his wives and on that day 'the court is held there, and the gifts which are presented to the master are placed in the treasury of that wife', thus shedding some light on the distribution of wealth among these ladies.[33] Similar descriptions can be found in the account given by Ibn Battuta on the appanages of Uzbek's wives in the Golden Horde, where women drove their own waggons.[34] He introduces the concept of the Khan having four main *khātūns*, who were ordered in a hierarchy similar to that observed by Rubruck, and he confirms the fact that the ruler divided his nights between the various *ordos* of his wives.[35] Each *khātūn* had a separate *ordo*, and he relates visiting the ladies separately, each of them having their own properties and subordinates.[36]

The Persian sources are not very specific regarding the ownership of *ordos* among the descendants of Chinggis Khan. For example, both Rashid al-Din and Banakati note that Ögetei had four great *khātūns*, but only mention the first two: Boraqchin Khatun, who was the eldest wife, and Töregene Khatun.[37] There is no mention of the former having her own *ordo*, while the latter clearly had one that allowed her to assume the regency of the empire.[38] The difference between these two was that Boraqchin did

not have any sons by the Khan and she was therefore not able to administer her own property. Among the concubines only Erkene, the mother of Ögetei's sixth son Qadam Oghul, is mentioned.[39] Interestingly enough, Rashid points out that he was raised in the *ordo* of Chaghatai, while those born of a chief wife (like Güyük) seem to have been raised in their mother's *ordo*. A similar situation occurs in the account of the wives of Chinggis Khan's second son Chaghatai.[40] Although he had many wives, two of them were more important than the others: Yesülün Khatun and her sister Tögen Khatun.[41] However, the eldest son of Chaghatai (Mochi Yebe) was not born of either of these *khātūns* but from a slave girl. She was 'in the *ordo* of Yesülün' and was assaulted by Chaghatai while his wife was away. The episode not only provides a reference to the existence of Yesülün's *ordo*, but also marks the status of the son born from this illegitimate union. It is mentioned that Chaghatai 'did not hold Mochi-Yebe of much account and gave him fewer troops and less territory'.[42]

In China, there is little information on the appanages of women in Qubilai's times. According to Marco Polo, Qubilai had four main wives and only their sons had the right to rule. But, more importantly, he mentions that each of them had a court of their own which more than ten thousand people were dependent upon.[43] However, some sources do not specify only four, but instead name many wives.[44] Of these *ordos* mentioned by Marco, only that of Chabui, the wife of Qubilai, is well known and has been noted by scholars.[45] Therefore, in order to have the right to an *ordo*, women not only needed to be a chief wife or provide a son, but to accomplish both states at the same time.[46] In the territories of Iran, however, the same formula did not apply. Although Doquz Khatun bore no sons to Hülegü, Rashid al-Din accords her the status of chief wife because 'she was the wife of his father'.[47] According to Mustawfi, Hülegü had seven chief wives but Doquz is not mentioned among them.[48] This discrepancy in the sources might be the result of a queen of Iran being improvised because one was required when Hülegü decided to claim these territories for himself, whilst later on Rashid needed to justify the status of this woman.[49] On the other hand, Mustawfi, writing in the mid-fourteenth century, saw no need to justify the rule of Doquz Khatun, while Rashid al-Din could not question the legitimacy of his patron Ghazan Khan. However, despite not being a chief wife or having a son by Hülegü, Doquz administered an *ordo* that continued to be maintained as a *khātun*'s *ordo* for generations of Ilkhanid women into the fourteenth century.

The example set by Doquz seems to have been followed by other women in the Ilkhanate into the second half of the thirteenth century. Despite only having a daughter and no sons by her first husband (Abaqa)

and having no children by her second husband (Arghun), Bulughan Khatun 'Bozorg' had an *ordo* of her own.[50] We do not have much information about her daughter beyond the mention of her marriage to Toghan Buqa.[51] So why, under these circumstances, was Bulughan given an *ordo*? There are two possible reasons. First, Rashid says that because Abaqa loved her so much she was placed above two of his other wives to whom he was already married.[52] It would seem from this that a *khātūn*'s personal appeal could be reason enough to grant her an *ordo*.[53] Second, because she could not have a son, she was in charge of raising the Khan's grandchild Ghazan as her own child.[54] In an interesting quotation, Rashid al-Din claims that Abaqa decided that, since Bulughan was going to act as foster mother to Ghazan, her *ordo* would belong to him when she died.[55] These two factors might be why Bulughan was granted an *ordo*, which, as we see below, eventually played a key role in the political development of Mongol Iran after her death.

Finally, the last three Ilkhans of Iran, those who embraced Islam, seem to have followed a similar pattern. According to Rashid al-Din, Ghazan Khan had seven wives.[56] In this account, one specific *ordo* is mentioned, that of Doquz Khatun, which was given to Kokachin Khatun, the lady who was accompanied by Marco Polo on his return from China. She is mentioned in fourth place in Rashid's enumeration of Ghazan's wives. She died soon after her husband's accession and it was at that moment that Ghazan married his seventh wife, Karamü, upon whom he bestowed the *ordo* which had once belonged to Doquz and then to Kokachin.[57] The lack of accurate data about the death dates for some of these *khātūns* makes it difficult to assess whether there were always four main *khātūns* at any one time. We know that Ghazan had seven wives in all and that two died very soon after Ghazan Khan took the throne, whereupon he married two others. Throughout his reign, it appears there were five main *khātūns* in total, with the possibility of there being four if his first wife Yedi Qurta had died before her husband.[58] Out of Ghazan's seven wives, only one is mentioned as having an *ordo*. The others may have had their own appanages, but they would not have been as important or prestigious as the one that belonged to Doquz Khatun. Having a son no longer seemed to be a requirement, since Ghazan only had one son from his fifth wife but the boy died in childhood.[59]

The decline in fertility rates among the Mongols in Iran might have had an influence on policies relating to the assignment of *ordos* to women. With a low survival rate among the descendants of the ruling house – not to mention the paucity of male heirs – the requirement to bear a son seems to have been abandoned by the fourteenth century. Upon taking control of

the realm, both Öljeitü (d. 1316) and then Abu Saᶜid (d. 1335) had to readjust the economic balance among the *khātūns*. We are told that, despite having many wives,[60] Öljeitü conferred the *ordo* of Ghazan Khan's wife Karamü upon his own wife Qutlugh Shah Khatun, even though she apparently bore him no son.[61] Nor was the last Ilkhan of Iran able to produce any male descendants from any of his six wives.[62]

So, under these particular circumstances, royal women in the Mongol Empire enjoyed, as they did in other medieval nomadic societies, a personal encampment where their property was held. However, it is less evident how these *ordos* functioned internally or what administrative structure they had.[63] The descriptions we possess from Christian travellers do not shed much light on those involved in their administration or on the functions of those who were attached to the *khātūns*. Occasionally, one encounters a reference to such individuals but their role within the structure of the camp is not given. We know that cattle were private property and that when a cattle owner joined an *ordo* his herds immediately became attached to that particular camp.[64] One may imagine, though, that in these circumstances the herdsman still bore personal responsibility for his animals.

Scattered references can be found for the period before 1260, when the empire was still under the direct command of one khan. At this time, women had various amirs in their *ordos* who were charged with carrying out their commands and administering their properties. For example, when Töregene was empress, some of her agents were sent to Khurasan to collect taxes in territories that were under the jurisdiction of the powerful Arghun Aqa.[65] Other agents were sent to the *ulus* of Batu with the same purpose.[66] Sorghaghtani Beki also had people to administer her revenues. According to Jean Aubin, at least three of them were also under the command of Arghun Aqa in Khurasan on her behalf and, when Möngke Khan came to the throne in 1251 they were given charge of different regions in Iran.[67] Finally, in Central Asia, those people in attendance to Orghina Khatun in her *ordo* played an important role in the nomination of her son Mubarak Shah for the throne of the *ulus* on the death of Alghu in 1266.[68]

This presence of 'agents' in the *ordos* of members of the royal family, both men and women, has been noticed by scholars in recent times.[69] However, evidence of women having individual responsibility for the administration of these entities is scarce. As the empire grew, so did the amount of property and numbers of people in the *ordos* and some sort of central administration was needed. At the top of the administrative structure, the figure of the *amīr ordo* (governor or commander of the camp)

appears several times in the Persian sources.[70] Their function is not clear, but it seems that as well as taking part in the administration of wealth in the *ordo* they may have been in charge of the soldiers.[71] References to these individuals can be found especially in connection with the women of the Ilkhanate. Among the wives of Hülegü, Öljei Khatun had an *amīr ordo* called Zangi, the son of Naya Noyan. Also mentioned are other amirs with different ranks, such as *amīr tūmen*, who was in charge of a military unit comprising ten thousand soldiers, and a weapons amir with obvious military responsibilities.[72] Although these two belonged to a male *ordo*, there is no reason to believe that women's camps did not also have amirs with these functions. Qutui Khatun also had an *amīr ordo* by the name of Asiq and he was in command of her properties and dependent soldiers. He was, as was Zangi, fundamental to the political development that promoted Arghun Ilkhan to the throne. Rashid al-Din says that in 1282, just before the coronation of Tegüder Ahmad, the son of Abaqa went to Siyah Koh and 'took over his father's treasury' to prevent his about-to-be-crowned uncle taking control of the royal funds. It was in this context that Asiq ordered that Arghun's *ṣāḥib dīvān* be imprisoned, and so he was held in the *ordo* of Tegüder Ahmad.[73] Although their specific duties are not described in the sources, the *amīr ordo* seems to have acquired considerable status, accumulating substantial wealth into the fourteenth century.[74] This is evident in the marriage of Ilkhan Öljeitü to ᶜAdilshah, who is specifically referred to by Kashani as the daughter of Sartaq, the *amīr ordo* of Bulughan Khatun.[75] This suggests that, if a man was the *amīr ordo* of a *khātūn*, it conferred sufficient status upon him in the Mongol court to permit him to marry his daughter – and thereby connect his family – to the Ilkhan.

Apart from these chief administrators, a *khātūn*'s *ordo* included several other dignitaries, officials and servants. According to Marco Polo, the imperial wives of Qubilai Khan had 'many pages and eunuchs, and a number of other attendants of both sexes; so that each of these ladies has not less than 10,000 persons attached to her court'.[76] It might be argued that Polo's description only applied to the court of Qubilai, who certainly had access to enough wealth in China to provide his wives with magnificent *ordos*. However, in his visit to the more 'pastoral' territories of the Golden Horde, Ibn Battuta was fascinated with the splendour of the *khātūn* camps. Compared with the Christian travellers who had passed through the region one century earlier, the Maghrebi voyager had greater access to the organisation of the ladies' *ordo*s. According to him, each of these ladies was 'accompanied by about fifty girls, … [and] twenty elderly women riding on horses between the pages and the waggon'.[77] Furthermore, these *ordos*

had a military guard of 200 mounted slave-soldiers (Mamluks) and 100 armed infantry at their disposal.[78] So, despite the differences in numbers, there is some resemblance between these *ordos* and those observed by Marco Polo in China.

Ibn Battuta's account is a bit more generous than others with regard to the details he provides on the administration of women's *ordos*. For example, he observes that, at a reception for visitors, the royal ladies would have an elderly woman on their right side and one younger one on their left. The former is described as an *ūlū khātūn*, which is translated by the traveller as 'lady vizier', while the latter is named a *kujuk khātūn*, a 'lady chamberlain' to the queen.[79] From such references, it is difficult to derive a clear picture of the duties and functions of these two women; however, the observations of the Moroccan traveller would suggest that these women had some responsibility for the functioning of the female camp, and maybe for some of its property.[80] There were also male officers. We are told that the emperor's daughter, It Kujujuk, summoned male staff and gave orders to them.[81]

It remains a possibility that every wife of a Mongol prince or khan had an *ordo*, but we have not specifically heard about them all. Yet, the available evidence suggests a much more complex situation in which queenly *ordos* can be traced across the Mongol Empire in different periods of its development. The ownership of such an *ordo* was generally reserved for the chief wives of a wealthy man if they had borne him a son, but this pattern could not be followed in all circumstances and exceptions to it occurred when certain conditions obtained, such as the personal favouring of a particular woman or low fertility rates among the ruling Mongols in the conquered territories. All in all, women in the Mongol Empire were centres of substantial economic activity, requiring trained personnel to oversee their operations.[82] Such personnel seem, by and large, to have eluded the historical accounts, but the presence of the *amīr ordos*, male and female pages and concubines suggests that the *ordos* of the *khātūns* had an internal structure that facilitated their economies.[83] Finally, other aspects of the administration of the *ordos* that appear in the sources, such as the administration of justice, banquets, receptions and diplomatic gatherings, surely required specialised people as well.[84]

Women's Economic Activity in the Mongol Empire

> Just as *ortaqs* [merchants] come with gold-spun fabric and are confident of making profit on those goods and textiles, military commanders should teach their sons archery, horsemanship, and wrestling well. They should test them in

> these arts and make them audacious and brave to the same degree that *ortaqs* are confident of their own skills.[85]

The *ordos* of the *khātūns* functioned as places where wealth could be stored, administered and used to influence the political life of the Mongol Empire. However, these camps governed by women needed to accumulate a constant flow of resources in order to maintain and ideally increase the wealth of these women. As the Mongol Empire grew, its economy found new opportunities and diversified into different profitable activities. The Mongols went from a mostly pastoral economy with limited trade during the early life of Chinggis Khan to adopting a complex economic system that not only included long-distance trade from China to the Black Sea but also mixed certain characteristics of the nomadic economy with tax systems of some of the sedentary societies they had conquered. The following sections explore how women participated in this complex economy by looking at areas of female economic activity from the time of Chinggis Khan, then following its development into the Ilkhanate. In order to facilitate comprehension of this development, this section is divided into three subsections that explore, first, aspects of the female role in a steppe-based economy during Chinggis Khan's lifetime; second, the united empire from the death of Chinggis Khan to the rule of Möngke Khan (r. 1251–9); and, finally, women's economic role in Ilkhanid Iran. In this final section, special attention is paid to the implementation of a dual system that tried to accommodate a Mongol traditional taxation system alongside the practices they encountered in Iran, resulting in new practices of economic exaction for the *khātūns*.

The *khātūns*' participation in the steppe economy: Chinggis Khan and appropriation by conquest

Although recent archaeological work has documented the existence of agricultural practices in the steppe at the time of Chinggis Khan, in pre-imperial Mongolia wealth was based on two basic resources: cattle and people.[86] As Chinggis Khan was subduing his rivals in the steppe, a process of systematised plunder, characteristic of this early stage, was carried on by his followers and relatives.[87] In *The Secret History of the Mongols*, this process is shown as being especially vigorous when Temüjin conquered a rival faction. For example, immediately after he had 'crushed and despoiled' the Keraits, the future Chinggis Khan started 'distributing them on all sides', giving to some of his allies a full subgroup of the conquered people.[88] He also took from his defeated rival his nieces, marrying one of them and

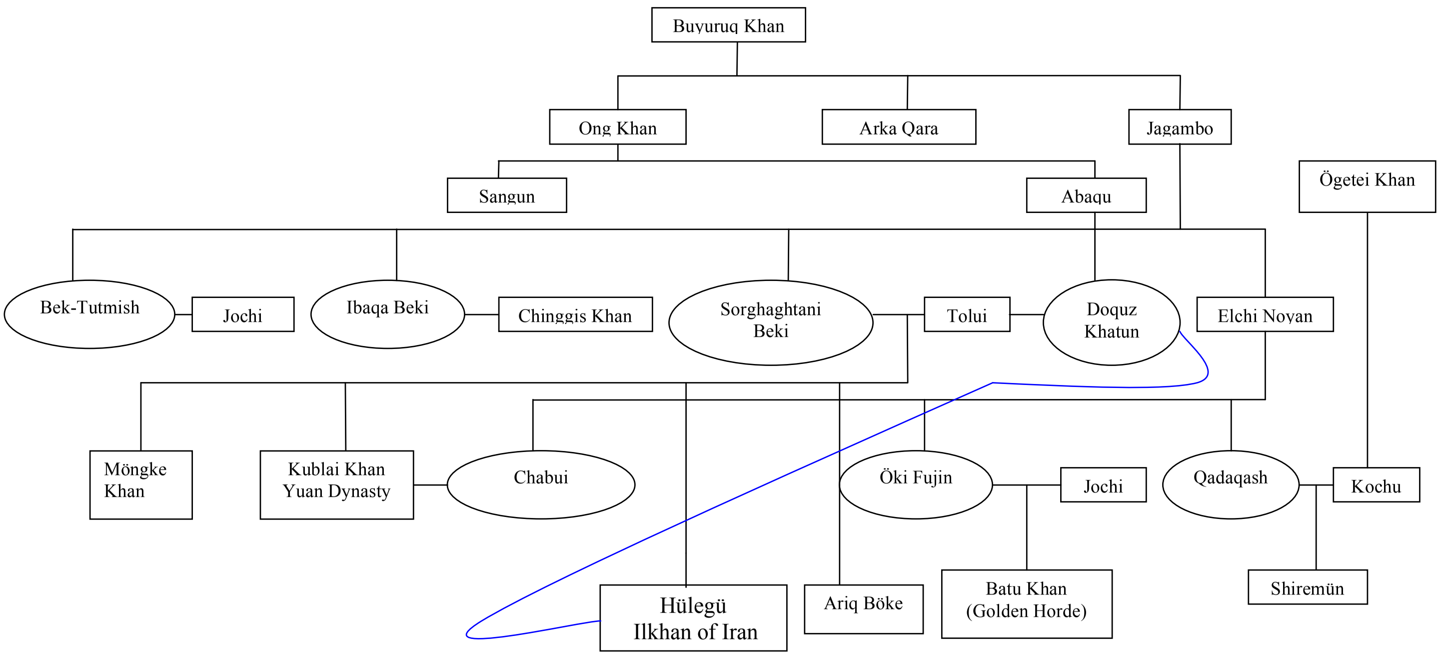


Figure 4.1 The Keraits and their connection to the Chinggisid family

giving the other to his son Tolui.[89] He was merciful to the father of the two women and allowed him to keep his subordinates; he put under his control all the resources belonging to him and his daughters. The following chapter in *The Secret History* details the division of the Kerait people and how they were distributed among Chinggis Khan's allies according to their merit in battle and how helpful they had been in the campaign.[90]

In this strategy of plunder and distribution, women participated in the booty and also had a share in it.[91] During this early period, one woman who received a considerable amount of wealth in this manner was Chinggis Khan's mother Hö'elün. She was always a beneficiary in the allocation of people conquered by Chinggis Khan. Sources disagree about her share of the booty, a subject that has generated a certain amount of discussion among scholars. *The Secret History* says that she received 10,000 people, while Rashid al-Din reduces this to 5,000 with another 3,000 going to the youngest son Otegin; these, however, remained within the mother's control, taking her tally to 8,000 people.[92] Having all these people under their command lent a military capability to members of the royal family, and an economic one too because herds and flocks came with the conquered and were incorporated into the Chinggisid family's *ordos*.[93] Numbers of animals are not given in the sources, but it is fair to say that the more people fell under their command, the wealthier they became. Hö'elün always received more people than the rest of the family. Her position as mother of the ruler was the determining factor.

However, she was not the only woman in Chinggis Khan's family to receive people who had been seized in war. His wife Börte had an *ordo* and at least occasionally was the recipient of such people. It is interesting that she is not mentioned in the Chinese, Persian or Mongolian sources when discussing the Khan's distribution of people. However, Rashid al-Din refers to the fate of a Tangut boy who was brought to the royal camp, presumably after a raid against the Hsi-Hsia kingdom.[94] Chinggis Khan came across the boy (the future Buda Noyan) and was impressed by his intelligence at such a young age. Interesting for us is that, after being in charge of a company of a hundred soldiers, Buda Noyan was promoted to become 'the commander of Börta Füjin's great ordu'.[95] The incorporation of people into Börte's *ordo* is not presented in quantitive but in 'qualitative' terms. Apart from Buda Noyan, other generals from different backgrounds from across the Steppe are mentioned as being part of Börte's personal appanage (along with, presumably, their dependants and flocks). People from the Sonit, the Dörbän and the Kerait tribes were assigned to her, confirming that she received a share of the Steppe people who submitted to her husband.[96] In the same section, other wives (Qulan Khatun) and

some of Chinggis Khan's daughters (Tümälün Khatun and Chächäyigän) are also reported to have been in command of people.[97] This suggests that, though it may only be Hö'elün who is mentioned in the context of the major distribution of people carried out by the Khan among his male relatives, other women in the royal family also participated in the system of conquest and distribution during the formative period of the empire.

A story concerning another of Chinggis's wives gives us not only further evidence of the existence of ladies' *ordos* and the share *khātūns* had in the revenues produced by the consolidation of the empire, but also some details about what the wealth in their camps consisted of. There is a famous anecdote in *The Secret History* and the *Jami*ᶜ *al-tawarikh* about Chinggis Khan giving away one of his chief wives, the Kerait Ibaqa Beki, to one of his generals. The story differs significantly between the two versions.[98] In the Persian account, the Khan gave his wife to a commander who was guarding his tent because he had had a dream in which 'God' had told him to put an end to his marriage with this *khātūn*. However, the Mongolian account simply sees this as Chinggis rewarding the commander, General Kehatay Noyan, for suppressing the revolt of Jagambo.[99] There are certainly correspondences in the two renditions: both sources make similar references to Chinggis Khan's disposal of the *khātūn*'s possessions. According to *The Secret History*, Chinggis Khan told the lady before giving her to her new husband:

> Your father Jaqa Gambu [Jagambo] gave you two hundred servants as a dowry; he gave you also the steward Ašiq Temür and the steward Alčiq. Now you are going to the Uru'ut people; go, but give me one hundred out of your servants and the steward Ašiq Temür to remember you.[100]

Similarly, Rashid al-Din mentions that Chinggis Khan asked her to leave him 'one cook and the golden goblet from which I drink kumiss', so that he would have 'mementos' of her when she was gone. But, according to this Persian account, 'he gave all the rest, everything in the camp, *ev-oghlans*, horses, retainers, stores, herds and flocks, to the lady'.[101] The story is useful to us for a number of reasons. First, it helps us to have a clearer idea of the kind of property these ladies had at their disposal. Ibaqa Beki had people under her command (at least 200), given by her father; she also possessed horses, slaves and cattle, which would have generated revenue. Second, it is noteworthy that both sources indicate that Chinggis retained part of the *khātūn*'s property before she was sent to her new husband.[102] On the one hand, Chinggis Khan seems to take a share as a sort of 'payment' because he is giving her away; at the same time, a reduction in the amount of property at a woman's disposal might also have been a

way to limit the resources of this lady and her fellow tribesmen in case another rebellion arose among the Keraits.

The expanding wealth of the new Mongol nobility in the early empire meant that women occupied a new role in the economy. As Allsen has noted, 'the Mongols, heretofore a society with limited purchasing power, now suddenly found themselves with vast and unaccustomed wealth, and the ruling strata, the main beneficiaries of the booty and tribute, were prone to an extravagance typical of the nouveau riche'.[103] Objects of luxury had been present in the Steppe before the empire, but consumption rapidly increased as more and more resources found their way into the hands of the *khātūns*.[104] The circulation of fine goods in the Mongol court is illustrated by the following anecdote. When Ögetei gave a poor man a pair of pearls belonging to his wife Möge Khatun in exchange for two melons, people thought the Khan had gone mad. The poor man had no idea of the value of the pearls but the Khan predicted that they would come back to his wife very soon. The man sold the pearls cheaply in the market and their buyer thought that because they were so beautiful they deserved to be given to a queen, so he brought the pearls back to the court and, thus, the Khan's prophecy was fulfilled.[105] The accumulation of such highly elaborate artefacts seems to have increased in the *khātūns*' *ordos* as the empire expanded, eventually reaching the levels of opulence described by Ibn Battuta among the ladies of Berke's *ulus* in the fourteenth century.[106] However, the *khātūns* were not only interested in luxury artefacts. Chinese sources describe the purchase of flour by Mongol women. It was necessary to transport it over a distance of up to 1,150 kilometres, but the *khātūns* had no problems in paying the bill.[107]

In order to satisfy increasing demand among Mongol princes and princesses, some kind of structure was needed which would enable trade to flourish and merchants to bring their products safely to their customers.[108] Accounts of the relationship between the Mongols and the merchants in this early period are not very clear. It seems that both parties actively collaborated, that the new empire stimulated and protected trade, and that Mongolia became a new market for Inner Asian traders.[109] An example of the presence of commercial agents from Central Asia before the rise of Chinggis Khan was documented when a Muslim called Hasan was among the campaign against the Keraits.[110] According to Juvayni, the Mongol lifestyle and the scarcity of well-established merchants meant that those traders who did reach the camps could expect high profits. Citing the profits made by a particular entrepreneur called Ahmad of Khojend, he highlights the fortunes that it was possible to make by bringing 'gold embroidered fabrics, cottons, *zandanichi* and whatever else they thought suitable' to be sold to the Khan and his family.[111]

Whilst the khans certainly dealt with merchants, references to women doing the same thing in this early period are not abundant. However, women's capital was represented in the commercial expedition sent by Chinggis Khan to the neighbouring Khwarazmshah kingdom in 1218 (this expedition became the catalyst for the invasion of Central Asia by the Mongols). The Khan gathered the merchants together and 'ordered his sons, daughters, wives, and military commanders to select Muslims from their respective retinues and to supply each with gold and silver ingots (balish) so that they might trade in the land of the Khwārazmshāh'.[112] This suggests that even at the time of Chinggis Khan, women were investing in long-distance commerce despite trade still being in its infancy when Chinggis Khan died in 1227. Guards were appointed at the borders of the Mongol domains to secure the unhindered entry of merchants, but this only happened when Chinggis Khan had consolidated his power in the Steppe.[113] Before that, it was mostly through the acquisition of booty that princes and *khātūns* were enriched. In this early period, women's wealth lay in cattle, horses and people, though they did occasionally invest in trading enterprises. With the establishment of a new generation of rulers in 1227 and the incorporation of foreigners into the administration, the economy of the empire expanded and became more sophisticated, and it was this that created the possibility of more varied economic roles for women.

Easy money, speculation and trade: Mongol women in the united empire's mercantile economy

The accumulation of wealth through the exaction of resources continued after the death of Chinggis Khan, with the *khātūns* continuing to garner riches when the Mongols conquered Northern China and Russia.[114] However, this wealth exaction quickly adopted a more 'imperial form' whereby not only cattle and soldiers but also skilled artisans were captured and brought to Mongolia to begin the construction of the imperial city of Qaraqorum at the heart of the Steppe.[115] Juvayni comments that the building of the new Mongol capital was an enterprise in which

> artisans of every kind were brought from Khitai, and likewise craftsmen from the lands of Islam; and they began to till the ground. And because of Qa'an's great bounty and munificence people turned their faces hitherward from every side, and in a short space of time it became a city.[116]

The economic relevance of the new Mongol capital can be noticed in the fact that Ögetei abandoned his fief in Eastern Turkestan and moved

towards the new city, where resources could be accumulated easily and economic activity centralised.[117]

In the two decades following the death of the founder of the empire, new ways of extacting and maximising resources developed as the empire grew. For example, Ögetei Khan expanded the network of relay stations created by Chinggis Khan. It was actually the second emperor of the Mongol Empire who made the financial effort to transform the famous *yam* system from a military function into a commercial enterprise.[118] The consolidation of this system of provision posts greatly stimulated merchants, who also benefited from Mongol investment in fixing the roads that connected different parts of the empire.[119] The period of Ögetei's reign (r. 1229–41) seems to have been a golden age for trade in the Mongol Empire. Infrastructures, benefits and an easy-spending nobility secured profits for those who ventured into the north-eastern parts of Asia.[120] However, towards the end of Ögetei's reign some new measures were implemented in order to further benefit from all this commercial activity. Prominent officials such as Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai and Mahmud Yalavach made the first attempts to establish a taxation system in order to regulate and tax trade.[121] In addition, during Töregene Khatun's regency, Yalavach was replaced by ᶜAbd al-Rahman and the commercial strategy of Ögetei's early reign was reinstated. As Allsen puts it, 'the regent was well disposed toward the merchants, who quickly resumed their former position at court. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, a personal favourite of Töregene, received an imperial seal that gave him administrative as well as fiscal control over north China'.[122] This transfer of attribution from the empress to her subordinates (including her advisor Fatima Khatun) and her commitment to a system less keen on central taxation and more open to 'free trade' could be interpreted as weakness in Töregene's government.[123] But, in her defence, the system considerably benefited her treasury.[124]

If Töregene is presented as the ruler who supported a decentralised administration that favoured the merchants' interests and damaged farmers and sedentary producers, it is Sorghaghtani Beki who is portrayed in the opposite light. It is important to note that Tolui's wife was among the first members of the royal family to enjoy a different type of personal income. The fact that she received territories as revenues in Northern China, which had a sizeable sedentary population, gave her the chance to be among the first Mongol nobles to implement a different economic system than the exaction and pastoral model of her predecessors.[125] Nonetheless, this attachment to a more centralised and tax-orientated model did not prevent Sorghaghtani from participating in trade activities that might have benefited her *ordo*. During the reign of her brother-in-law

Ögetei, Sorghaghtani was in charge of not only her personal camp but also the people and revenues of her deceased husband Tolui. She appointed her own representatives in the stations (*tayan yams*) of the *yam* network under the coordination of a man called Alchiqa.[126] But, the organisation of commerce and the distribution of profit were not as smooth as the sources suggest. As the empire grew, so too did competition between members of the royal family. At stake was the assignment of merchants, who became increasingly sought after as more and more members of the royal family acquired wealth and became involved in trade. Powerful and wealthy women were able to claim particular merchants (*ortaqs*) even if they belonged to the Khan.[127] *Khātūns* with less influence at the court had to force 'people of the provinces' to give their sons up not only for domestic service but also to become *ortaqs* in the service of Mongol princesses for a small remuneration.[128]

The involvement of women in trade was not restricted to granting authorisations to merchants. Although references to women are not abundant, some of them sent members of their personal *ordos* on expeditions to seek trade beyond the frontiers of their fiefs. Sorghaghtani Beki, being wealthy and favoured by the Persian sources, received much attention in matters of the economy. Rashid al-Din recalls a particular occasion when she sent a thousand men in a ship to sail northward along the Angara River into deep Siberia.[129] Three commanders of the lady's *ordo* were in charge of the expedition, which had the objective of reaching 'a province near which is a sea of silver'. The group made it and obtained so much silver that they were not able to put it all in the ship.[130] There are no other descriptions of women ordering expeditions for raw materials in the sources. However, this is not to say that other *khātūns* who had important appanages in this period did not also finance exploration, considering the amount of people and resources they had at their disposal.

It is interesting to see how the same sources dealing with similar topics can change their perceptions depending on the political outlook.[131] Sorghaghtani was praised for the expedition that found so much silver, but, when referring to the regency of Oghul Qaimish, Rashid says that her relationship with merchants was the reason she neglected the empire's governance. The reference indicates the direct involvement of *khātūns* in the commercial life of the empire, but the regent is described as spending most of her time with shamans (*qams*), which meant that in her reign 'little was done, however, except for dealings with merchants', referring to her role as a consumer but probably also to her role as a promoter of trade.[132] Thus, it appears that during the reign of Güyük and his wife Oghul Qaimish, trade flourished with the Silk Road connecting

the Far East and Europe via the Russian Steppe. Nevertheless, the hugely profitable unregulated trade system supported by Töregene and afterwards by her son and daughter-in-law seems to have clashed with the necessity, by the end of 1240, to have a more centralised economic administration.

Persian sources highlight the fact that by the time Oghul Qaimish left the throne in 1250, the expenditure of the imperial treasury was out of control. Rashid al-Din specifically blames Güyük's wives, sons and relatives for dealing with merchants on 'a still greater scale than during his lifetime' and they did so by writing drafts to the dealers which were backed up by a rapidly contracting imperial treasury.[133] Even if the debts owed to the merchants by Oghul's administration were exaggerated by the pro-Toluid Persian sources, its mention is, to use Allsen's words 'significant and symbolic'.[134] The relationship between the royal family and the merchant community functioned in this period at a personal level, with presumably lax central control over expenditure and the issuing of drafts based on anticipated revenues.[135] The overissuing of these drafts and the inadequacy of the resources to pay them may have provoked a cycle of speculation and inflation leading to what was seen as a chaotic economic period in the 1240s.[136] Not without a strong bias, the Persian and pro-Toluid sources present the reign of Möngke Khan as a return to economic stability.

If the period prior to the death of Chinggis Khan was marked by an economic system based on the exaction and distribution of wealth via conquest, the rule of the Ögeteids and the regencies of their women could arguably be seen as a golden age in the expansion of trade across the empire.[137] The consolidation of the *yam* system led to rapid and lucrative commerce that not only enriched the multinational merchant community of Eurasia, but allowed Mongol women to invest in commercial expeditions, establish commercial enterprises with traders and satisfy their personal desire for luxury products, which in itself helped to stimulate the economy. However, this model depended upon the constant exacting of wealth through military means and complete freedom of action for the *ortaqs*.[138] During the 1240s, when women ruled, there were no massive military expeditions and no new sources of revenue. By 1250, the model proposed ten years earlier by Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai was reinstated. Möngke Khan assumed control with a new set of advisors who were more in tune with the policies developed by his mother Sorghaghtani in her sedentary dominions in Northern China.

The new Khan implemented a series of measures to better control the imperial treasury, to establish a more settled economy based on taxation, to promote farming and to control the merchants.[139] This did not mean that

trade was out of favour or that business with merchants had to stop. On the contrary, Rashid al-Din says that debts owing to traders were paid by Möngke and the flow of entrepreneurs continued in Eurasia. For example, William of Rubruck constantly relied on the advice of merchants of various origins he encountered across Eurasia during his trip to the court of the Khan.[140] In addition, Mongol women dealing with merchants are documented well into the fourteenth century in, for example, the Golden Horde.[141] Yet, in the middle of the thirteenth century, a new model was implemented and it aimed to tidy up the imperial accounts and produce a more efficient revenue system which would favour the rulers. In 1251, Möngke Khan and his administrators introduced a 'Mongol taxation system' for the conquered population, which was brought by Hülegü into Iran when he was named Ilkhan in 1260. In the same way that women had their share of the booty in the 'exaction system' and were active in the period of 'free trade' during the unified Mongol Empire, it was expected that they would participate in the new system.

The khātūns' economic participation in Ilkhanid Iran: dealing with a sedentary population

The economic development of the Ilkhanate has generally been described as evolving in two stages, divided by the reign of Ghazan Khan.[142] The economic reforms introduced by him and his vizier Rashid al-Din have been regarded as a turning point in the government of Mongol Iran. New economic policies were introduced which focused on land productivity and new modes of taxation, abandoning the Mongol exaction model of the early empire. However, doubts have been raised as to whether these measures were actually implemented and the degree to which the sedentary Persian population really benefited from them.[143] The reforms were begun under Möngke Khan (r. 1251–9) and continued by Hülegü when he conquered Iran, as the financial notes left by his advisor Nasir al-Din Tusi suggest.[144] Nonetheless, on top of these reforms, the second conquest of Iran and the further campaigns carried out by the Mongols in the Middle East under the Ilkhans added new opportunities for booty in similar terms to those campaigns of the united empire. In this case, once again women were to be among the beneficiaries of the resources obtained from military campaigns.

Hülegü's military conquest of the Middle East produced enormous booty. Great amounts of gold, silver, horses and slaves were taken with the fall of Baghdad in 1258 and further tributes were received from the caliph when he capitulated.[145] Furthermore, the continuation of the



Plate 1 A portrait of Alan Qo'a in a nineteenth-century manuscript of the *Mu^{c}izz al-ansab*. British Library, Or. 467



Plate 2 Mongol court scene. Diez Album, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, fol. 70, S. 10, Nr. 1



Plate 3 The birth of a Mongol prince. Diez Album, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, S. 8, Nr. 2

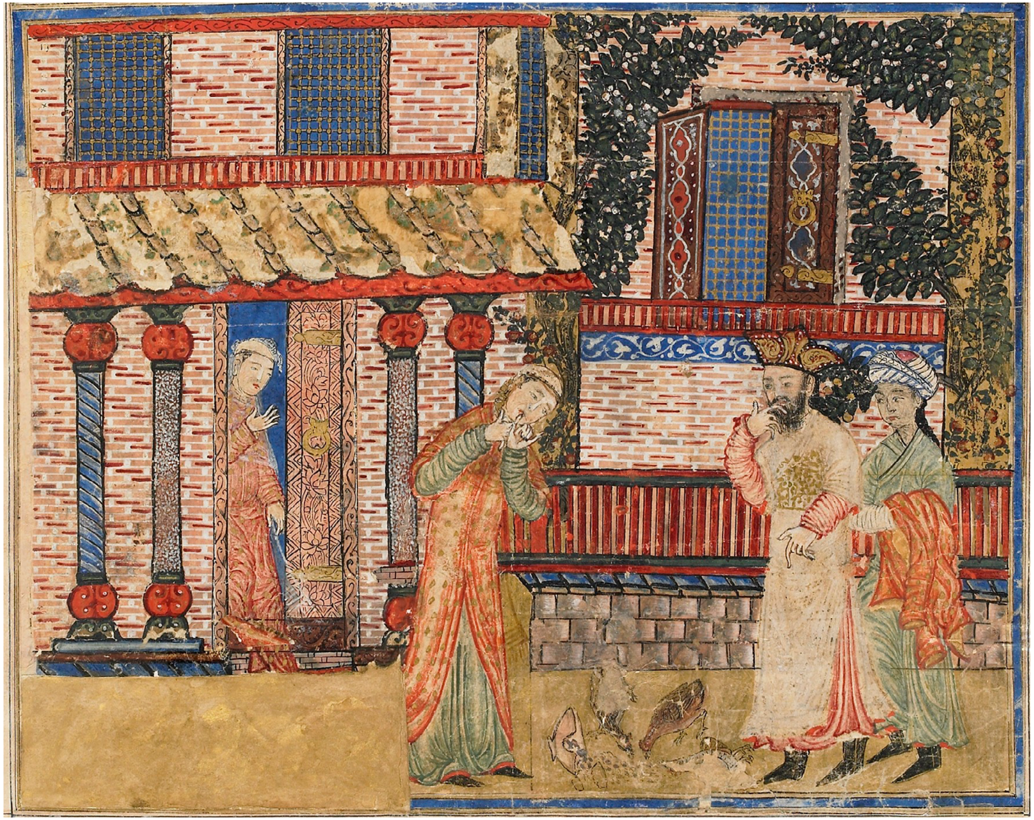


Plate 4 Ardashir being poisoned by his wife (from the Great Mongol *Shahnamah*). Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, ms S86.0106



Plate 5 Mongol men and woman in the *ordo*. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Supplément Persan 1113, f. 174a.



Plate 6 Portrait of a khan and *khātūn*. Diez Album, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, S. 63, Nr. 2



Plate 7 Preparations for a Mongolian festival. Diez Album, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, S. 18, Nr. 1



Plate 8 Two Mongols reading the Quran. Diez Album, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, S. 8, Nr. 1

military campaigns in the Mamluk territories in Syria and Palestine in 1260 yielded substantial riches, some of which were distributed among the family members and some sent back to the court of Möngke in Mongolia.[146] There is evidence that at least part of this booty accumulated during Hülegü's conquests was set aside for the women's personal treasuries in their *ordos*. When the first Ilkhan died in 1265, his successor Abaqa informed his widows of his passing. Among these ladies was one of his principal wives (Qutui Khatun), who had been on her way from Mongolia to Iran to meet her husband. When she arrived, Abaqa received her and 'enriched with money and goods' the wife of his father. In addition, a concubine of Hülegü called Arighan was included among the 'items' reserved for the newly arrived Qutui Khatun to become one of her attendants.[147] Her actual role in the court of the Ilkhan is made clear when Rashid al-Din mentions that 'Qutui Khatun's share of booty and plunder had been turned over to her [Arighan]. She had accumulated vast amounts of valuable items and property, so when Qutui Khātūn arrived in the ordu she found it well stocked with all sorts of things'.[148] This story shows firstly that women still had a share in the revenues produced by conquest during the invasion of Iran and after the establishment of the Ilkhanate. Secondly, it underlines once again the difference between the status of wife and concubine among the *khātūns*, since the properties belonged to the chief consort of the Ilkhan while the concubine played a role in accumulating and administrating the *khātūn*'s revenues.

In addition to a direct accumulation of wealth made by women from the booty obtained in military campaigns, resources were distributed among members of the royal family through other channels. For example, different types of gifts were exchanged among important personalities across the empire, playing an important role in maintaining alliances between factions and territories.[149] Whenever a new Ilkhan ascended the throne, the ladies of the court would receive gifts. Hülegü gave to his sisters, sons and generals immediately after appointing a man in charge of the treasury in Iran.[150] His two immediate successors, Abaqa and Tegüder, also made gifts to the *khātūns* when they took the throne.[151] Similarly, Geikhatu and especially Ghazan Khan, whose generosity was remarked upon by Rashid al-Din, gave money to the women on several occasions.[152] It is not easy to be precise about the quantity of riches transferred from the treasury to the ladies' *ordos*. Such gifts generally included money and luxury goods such as goblets, jewels and especially expensive textiles.[153] In turn, the women bestowed gifts of money on local nobles and religious leaders, contributing in this way to a further distribution of wealth.[154]

These personal gifts and presents need to be distinguished from the

other sources of income which noble women had in Iran. In the Ilkhanate, there was a larger sedentary population than among other regions of the empire such as the Golden Horde or the Chaghataid Khanate. The taxation of Mongol Iran is confusing and has generated a considerable amount of literature. Generally speaking, the Ilkhanate functioned with a dual administration system which maintained the existing Islamic-Persian system and incorporated mainly three new fiscal measures of Mongol origin.[155] The difference in the Mongol taxation system appears to rest on the fact that it was irregular in its timetable and based on the census to determine the amounts to be paid. On the other hand, the Islamic-Persian system was based on land productivity. This difference between the two systems allowed for their coexistence, but also doubled the financial pressure on the conquered population.[156]

Three new taxes were introduced by the Mongols with the clear purpose of generating income for the royal family. The first was called the *qubchur*, which, according to Juvayni, was introduced in Iran as part of the reforms carried out by Möngke in the early 1250s.[157] It seems to have been a tax of nomadic origin designed to exact cattle and soldiers; subsequently, it was transformed into a poll tax to adapt to the sedentary subjects of Iran.[158] The second tax is generally referred to as the *qalān* in Persian sources, but not much is known about it; it is presumed to be a generic term referring to a group of nomadic exaction taxes which were adapted to the financial needs of the conquerors.[159] Finally, there was a tax called the *tamghā*, which is agreed to have been a tax on trade and commercial transactions, which, as we will see below, continued to play an important role in the Ilkhanate. In turn, the fiscal burden over the local population became too high, meaning that this dual taxation system could not be maintained for long. The deteriorating economy in the second half of the thirteenth century, together with the progressive incorporation of local administrators into the court, were the driving forces behind the important economic reforms carried out by Ghazan Khan at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries.

The taxation system helped the Ilkhanate to accumulate resources that were distributed, as we have seen, among the influential Mongol women of Iran. In addition, noble women participated more directly in the Ilkhanate economy through 'estate taxes' which were divided between those lands under the supervision of the *dīvān* and those which were the direct property of the royal family (*khāṣṣa* and *injü*).[160] The former was land confiscated by the Mongols from the conquered Persian nobility, and its revenues were used for the maintenance of the Khan, the *khātūns*, the offspring of the royal family and members of the *ordos*.[161] Interestingly,

the Mongol concept of the *ordo* is similar to the *injü*, which includes produce from a particular piece of land, revenues from taxes (both Persian and Mongol) and people who inhabit the place.[162] Consequently, when we find references in the sources to Mongol women in Iran being allocated land to hold in usufruct, we should not understand that they governed such land, but that they enjoyed its productivity.[163]

In Iran, the practice of allotting land to women took place from the very beginning. Abaqa distributed the resources of sedentary populations among the *khātūns*, giving

> a portion of Mayyafariqin [in Syria] to Qutui Khatun, part of Diyarbekir and the province of Jazīra [Iraq] to Oljäi Khatun, Salmas [north-western Iran] to Jumghur's wife Tolun Khatun and his sons Jüshkab and Kingshü. He also gave some territories to his sons and concubines.[164]

However, from the end of Abaqa's reign, it appears that the allocation of estate taxes for *khātūns*' *ordos* was replaced by a system whereby the allocated region had to pay a fixed tax that a women's servant collected from the assigned territories.[165] According to Rashid al-Din, funds were squandered and corruption among the servants of the ladies and the governors of the provinces led to an ever-increasing loss of revenue, culminating in the financial chaos of Geikhatu's reign (r. 1291–5). This situation prepared the way for the Persian vizier to justify the reforms of his patron Ghazan Khan when he assumed control of the realm. It is said that trials were held to punish corrupt servants and provincial deputies, whilst the administration of the ladies' *ordos* was reformed, which included restricting their autonomy. Despite the corruption and possible impoverishment of the *khātūns*' *ordos* during this period of financial chaos, women retained control over property, attested to by the fact that Ghazan Khan gained the support of many women's *injüs* to finance his claim to the throne in 1294–5.[166] Further, women having land revenues under their command seems to have persisted up to the reign of Abu Saᶜid (r. 1317–35). When speaking of Baghdad Khatun, Ibn Battuta mentions that 'each khātūn possesses several towns and districts and vast revenues, and when she travels with the sultan she has her own separate camp'.[167]

Finally, it is worth mentioning that in the Ilkhanate trade continued to be a pivotal part of the Mongol economy, even acquiring a global dimension, as it was strategically located on the trade routes that connected Europe, India and the Far East.[168] Opening trade routes had been a clear policy from the time of Möngke and this remained so under Hülegü.[169] The immense booty gained by the conquest of Alamut and the sacking of Baghdad might have acted like a magnet, drawing merchants to the

Ilkhanate. Rashid al-Din laments the fact that once Ghazan had come to the throne, 'the treasures Hülegü Khan had brought from Baghdad, the infidels' territories, and other places … had been stolen by the guards over time, and bars of gold and jewels were being sold to merchants'.[170] The Mongol rulers' interest in keeping commerce flowing in Iran can be seen from the very beginning. When Hülegü occupied Baghdad after defeating the last Abbasid caliph, he sent two of his commanders to begin the reconstruction of the city. The Ilkhan commanded that, once the dead had been buried, the markets of the city were to be restored as quickly as possible.[171] There are other examples of this determination to restore trade after military conflict. During Ghazan Khan's campaign to repel the Golden Horde's incursion into Azerbaijan, the area was 'obliterated', according to Rashid al-Din, but the merchants returned to the region of Tabriz to continue trading.[172]

In the first period of the Ilkhanate, Mongol women in Iran appear to have managed to maintain their lifestyle with the revenues produced in their *ordos.* With booty, land revenues and gifts pouring in from the Khan and the amirs, the *khātūns* seem to have been well provided for. In this period of plenty, Rashid al-Din notes, merchants were a common feature in female camps, where they moved goods to benefit the *khātūns* and were depositaries of the ladies' revenues.[173] Marco Polo observed that Mongol women were constantly involved in trading activities, selling and buying all that they and their dependants needed.[174] These women, who belonged to the highest strata of the Ilkhanid nobility, shared their

> connexion with the great commercial companies and with big wholesale and transit trade. They invested a part of their income in the companies of the great wholesale merchants, called usually urtaq (ortaq) … who returned the feudal lords [or ladies] their share of the profit in goods, mostly textiles.[175]

However, the growing dependence of the nobility upon the merchant community led to corruption and financial speculation, and the manipulation of the currency to the benefit of the merchants themselves, which inevitably led to the draining of treasuries and to economic instability.[176]

One of the areas where trade became especially profitable in the Ilkhanate was the Persian Gulf and the provinces of southern Iran that connected the Arabian Peninsula, the Levant and India.[177] These regions were ruled in the first half of the Ilkhanate by different women of the Salghurid and Qutlughkhanid dynasties. The Salghurids, an autonomous entity under Mongol rule, controlled the Persian Gulf and the revenues from trade in that region.[178] As we have seen, Abesh Khatun, the ruler of Fars, struggled to impose her authority and to protect the treasuries of the

province against the ever more controlling central Mongol court. After her death, Rashid al-Din says, the dynasty ceased to have any real control over the region. He mentions that, 'although the office of malik of Shiraz is now performed by *ortags* and merchants, the drums are still beaten at the gates of the atabegs' palace and the Great Dīvān is still held there'.[179] However, by the fourteenth century, Hormuz, according to Shabankara'i, was under the control of a woman called Bibi Maryam, who also controlled the Gulf and the lucrative trade of the area.[180]

To summarise, female economic activity in the Ilkhanate went through different phases. Initially, women continued to benefit from the distribution of wealth carried out by the rulers, with the resources coming from the conquest of Iran and the appropriation of the treasuries of the caliph and Alamut. Much of this came in the form of presents, which helped to maintain the always unstable political alliances of the Mongol *ulus*, whilst at the same time enabling these women to create demands that dynamised the economy. Gradually, the sedentary nature of larger parts of Iran and Möngke's new approach to the land made way for women to be allocated a share of the dual taxation system, especially in taxes from those lands confiscated from the Persian nobles who had not joined the Mongols as they advanced westwards into the Middle East. The constant interest of the Mongol nobility in trade and commercial exchange allowed women to invest at least part of their income with the merchants of their camps in order to finance the increasing demands of their lifestyle. This encouraged speculation and corruption, which the Ilkhans tried to counteract by the imposition of taxes on the sedentary population of the provinces, particularly in southern Iran. This culminated with the reforms of Ghazan Khan and his vizier Rashid al-Din, who sought to put an end to uncontrolled exaction.

The Economic Autonomy of Mongol Women in the Ilkhanate: From Transmission to Appropriation of Wealth

Despite the risk of being oversimplistic, the period of Mongol domination in Iran can be divided into two different scenarios for methodological purposes. The first corresponds to a period when, despite Tegüder Ahmad's short reign, there was continuity in the line of succession from Hülegü (d. 1265) through the descendants of Abaqa (d. 1282), his son Arghun (d. 1291) and then Geikhatu (d. 1295). The second period begins with the struggle for power between Baidu (d. 1295) and Ghazan Khan (r. 1295–1304), and the latter's conversion to Islam. These two periods influenced in different ways the transmission practices of female properties, conditioning their economic autonomy and modifying the way in

which property had passed from woman to woman in previous periods. Despite influential women having a say over who the new recipient of an *ordo* should be, it needs to be stressed that the sources clearly mention that the allocation of women's *ordos* after a *khātūn*'s death always rested with the male ruler of Iran or male members of the royal family. So, even if the administration of resources belonged to women, the ownership of the *ordos* remained a masculine monopoly. In this section, we are mostly concerned with exploring how the custom of men controlling the passage of property from woman to woman became a direct appropriation of the *khātūns*' property by men, thus betraying the tradition of women's administration of these resources.

The transmission of the khātuns' property in Iran before Ghazan's reforms

Although information regarding the transmission practices of *khātūns*' *ordos* is generally incomplete for most regions of the Mongol Empire, in the case of the Ilkhanate it is fairly abundant. This might be due to the direct involvement of Rashid al-Din in the reforms carried out by Ghazan Khan. The need for the Persian vizier to account for women's property in order to reconstitute the Ilkhanate economy might have been the reason for the detailed information his account generally provides about these women. The considerable accumulation of wealth from looting, trade and confiscation by the Mongols in the early Ilkhanid period might have created a surplus which led to the economic autonomy of the *khātūns*' *ordos*.

References to the transmission of property among Hülegü's wives start to emerge at the time of his death in 1265. It is at this moment that his son and heir Abaqa began to redistribute female properties among the women in his family. Hülegü had distributed the *ordos* of his wives to different parts of the empire when he had conquered Iran. Among them was one of his major wives, Güyük Khatun, who died in Mongolia before the departure of her husband to the west.[181] According to Banakati, her camp was given to a certain woman called Arzani, about whom we have no further information.[182] However, Rashid al-Din clearly mentions that when Güyük Khatun died, Hülegü married Qutui Khatun and gave her the ordo of the decreased khatun.[183] Qutui brought with her the *ordo* of Güyük Khatun to Iran and united it with the properties that were kept aside for her in the Ilkhanate until her arrival.

The *ordos* of Hülegü's other wives remained in their hands while they were alive. This was so with the properties of Öljei Khatun, who was the

sister of Güyük Khatun by another mother.[184] Because she lived longer than her husband, Abaqa married her and kept her *ordo* intact.[185] As we have seen, she used her prestige and economic autonomy in the political struggles of the Ilkhanate by supporting Arghun against Tegüder Ahmad and hosting her daughter-in-law Abesh Khatun at her *ordo*. In general, if the wife of the father was still alive, the Mongols in this period married these women to ensure that their property and people would be on their side in the event of a conflict. Yet some complicated cases appear, for example with the *ordo* of Doquz Khatun (d. 1265), who died shortly after her husband Hülegü and had no children. This meant that her properties were left without a head, posing a challenge to successive Ilkhans on how to deal with the wealth and people of this lady. The fact that she is not mentioned among the official wives of Hülegü has raised further suspicion over her possible role in securing legitimacy for the Ilkhanate and the Hülegüid line of succession.[186] Possibly this role as legitimiser of a line of succession helps to explain the fact that the transmission of her *ordo* is the only one that can clearly be traced into the fourteenth century as being held exclusively by women, even beyond the economic reforms carried out by Ghazan Khan.

When Doquz died in 1265 Abaqa married Tuqtani Khatun, a former concubine of his father's, in order to promote her to principal *khātūn* and put her in charge of Doquz's *ordo*.[187] So now the *ordo* was not only still under the authority of a woman, but a woman of the same tribal origin and Christian faith as Doquz Khatun. Arguably, this move might have helped Abaqa maintain the alliances forged by his father with that community.[188] Tuqtani died on 21 February 1292 (on the last day of Safar 691) during the reign of Geikhatu. However, as a sign of times to come, the new receiver of the *ordo* was not married by the present Khan of Iran but by his nephew Ghazan. Doquz Khatun's *ordo* was then given to Kokachin Khatun, a lady from the family of Bulughan Khatun 'Bozorg' who became famous among historians for being the lady that travelled from China with Marco Polo on the Venetian merchant's return to Europe.[189] It is noteworthy to mention that the incorporation of this *khātūn*'s *ordo* into Ghazan's sphere of influence occurred only a few years before he ascended the throne, just in time for the contingent of people belonging to this camp and the legitimacy that came with it to help Ghazan in his struggle against Baidu. See Figure 4.2 for some more examples of the transmission of *khātūns*' *ordos*.

Kokachin Khatun died only four years after arriving in Iran in 1296, when her husband Ghazan had already been crowned ruler of the Ilkhanate and converted to Islam. Unlike with other *khātūns*' *ordos*

in this later period, Ghazan decided to place a woman in charge of it after his wife's death, keeping this set of properties under the control of women. He gave the camp to a woman called Karamun after marrying her in 1299 and receiving a sizeable dowry.[190] Not much is known about this woman beyond the fact that she was the daughter of Abatay Noyan and the cousin of Bulughan Khatun 'Mo^c^azzama', the wife of Arghun and Ghazan.[191] She passed away on 21 January 1304 (12 Jumada II 703). According to Rashid al-Din, Ghazan was deeply affected by her death and her body was carried to Tabriz to be buried. After that, 'he [Ghazan] went into her ordu and wept much. He ordered that whatever arrangements and ceremony she deserved should be carried out. After her coffin was taken away, tears welled up in his imperial eyes every time he thought of her'.[192] The *ordo*, however, was not left empty and when Öljeitü was crowned later that year he placed his new wife Qutlughshah Khatun in charge of it.[193]

There are two interesting elements here. First, it seems that the *ordo* originally belonging to Doquz Khatun had a certain symbolic value, possibly functioning as a source of legitimacy for the Mongol rulers of Iran. Further, although Rashid al-Din finished his chronicle in the reign of Ghazan, he includes in his account the fact that the *ordo* belonged to a wife of Öljeitü, a singularity that does not appear in relation to other *ordos*.[194] Second, looking at the receiver of the *ordo*, another interesting element emerges. Qutlughshah Khatun was the daughter of Amir Irinjin, a powerful amir who had rebelled against Abu Sa^c^id in 1319.[195] Amir Irinjin, according to some sources, was not only a relative of Doquz Khatun, but also a Christian.[196] Therefore, the transmission of this *ordo* into this Christian family and its maintenance into the fourteenth century might suggest a possible connection between it and the Christian community of the Ilkhanate, an association originally used by Hülegü and Abaqa almost sixty years previous.

Some women in charge of *ordos* were replaced by other women when they died. However, a number of ladies' *ordos* seem to have been created from scratch by rulers at the time of their enthronement. Yesünjin, Abaqa's mother, was one of Hülegü's secondary wives and belonged to the Suldus people in attendance at the *ordo* of the above-mentioned Güyük Khatun.[197] When she came to Iran with Qutui Khatun, Abaqa's mother was given an *ordo* and her status was upgraded to 'Mother of the Khan'.[198] Her camp is interesting because, after her death in 1272, it passed to Padshah Khatun, a Muslim non-Mongol woman who became the first 'native' Turco-Iranian to become a *khātūn* and official wife of a Mongol Ilkhan.[199] Her status was upgraded from secondary wife to Khatun after her arrival in Iran. This

also suggests that Yesünjin's ordo was newly created, since she had been in the Güyük *ordo*, which she did not inherit because it passed to Qutui, who was still alive and administering the camp.[200] In the case of Abaqa's wives, the first woman he married. We do not know much about her, but, after her death, Abaqa replaced her with a Tatar woman called Nuqdan, who eventually mothered Geikhatu Ilkhan.[201] Nuqdan died and Abaqa put in her place El-Tuzmish Khatun, a woman of the Qonqirat people, related to the Chaghataids through her mother.[202] Despite not having a clear sense of its origin, this *ordo*'s importance resides in the fact that it belonged to the chief wife of Abaqa. In addition, El-Tuzmish Khatun married three successive Mongol Ilkhans, which might be an indication of the symbolic and economic value that holding this encampment provided to this lady.[203] Further, this *ordo* continued functioning into the early fourteenth century under the reign of Ghazan Khan, when we find descriptions of the *khātūn* travelling around Iran, guarding Mongol princes in her camp and giving banquets for the Khan and the ladies of the court.[204] Similarly, the *ordo* of Martai Khatun, Abaqa's second wife, seems to have been of a new type. Martai was of a prestigious lineage since she (and her well-known brother Musa) were grandchildren of Chinggis Khan by his daughter Tümälün.[205] She lived into the reign of Arghun and was replaced by Tödai Khatun, a former wife (or possibly originally a concubine) of Abaqa who played an important role in the struggle between Arghun and Tegüder Ahmad.[206] This last woman (Tödai) only became a *khātūn* after Arghun placed her in charge of Martai's *ordo* in about 1287, and she continued to hold it at least until 1295 when her camp was the setting for a peace treaty.[207] Interestingly, Tegüder Ahmad was incapable of taking any women from his father Hülegü and only one from his brother Jumghur.[208] In fact, when he tried to claim Tödai after the death of Abaqa, he was firmly opposed by Arghun. This lady became a major conflict between Arghun and Tegüder Ahmad during the civil war that confronted these two Ilkhans. Eventually, Arghun married Tödai only after Ahmad's death, making her a *khātūn* and providing her with an *ordo* and the economic autonomy to influence the political life of the Ilkhanate. Tegüder Ahmad's attempts to seize these properties, and Arghun's resistance to them, suggest that the patrimony initially secured by Abaqa by marrying his father's wives helped to secure, through Mongol patrilineality, the legitimacy and economic strength of Abaqa's descendants. This conflict for a woman's *ordo* is an indication of the economic background to the political struggle for succession in the Ilkhanate between the traditional elective system of rulers and the lineal descent from Hülegü that would ultimately be imposed.

Finally, there is one *ordo* that illustrates the transition from this early period to the reforms carried out by Ghazan Khan. Bulughan Khatun 'Bozorg' was a woman of the Baya'ut people who first married Abaqa and, like Dorji and Martai, received an *ordo* for herself. However, 'because he [Abaqa] loved her very much, he seated her above Martai and Täspina (Despina) Khātūn'.[209] She bore only a daughter by Abaqa and when he died Arghun married her and the rest of Abaqa's wives.[210] Her *ordo* was instrumental in Arghun's escape when Tegüder Ahmad imprisoned him for rebellion.[211] When Bulughan died in 1286 her body was taken to Shujas near the city of Sultaniya where, presumably, Arghun was buried later on.[212] Following the usual pattern when the holder of a *khātūn*'s *ordo* had died, Arghun married another woman called Bulughan Khatun ('Mo^{c}azzama') from the Eljigin branch of the Qonqirat people.[213] We will further explore the singularity of this *ordo* in relation to Ghazan Khan's rise to power in the next section, but would like to stress at this point that the *ordo* of the 'Bulughan ladies' was a new allocation of properties created by Abaqa Khan, maintained thereafter by Arghun and then by Geikhatu and Ghazan into the early fourteenth century.[214]

In this period, the *khātūns*' *ordos* that had originally been created in Mongolia were maintained and the new ones were created by the Ilkhans of Iran. The allocation to women of property from different sources and its storage in their *ordos* certainly provided women of the noble strata with an important degree of economic autonomy. Their role in the political development of the Ilkhanate is illustrated by the importance of female camps in promoting diplomatic encounters, protecting fugitives and even planning rescue missions. Furthermore, the attention that Mongol male rulers paid to securing the passing on of these *ordos* as integral units might have encouraged the growth of wealth in these camps. So, two elements, namely the increasing value of the ladies' *ordos* and the increasing involvement of women in politics, appear to have made these camps economic and political bases that might sometimes have held the balance of power when there was disagreement over the election of a new ruler of the Ilkhanate.[215] In relation to this, when the Ilkhanate suffered a deep economic crisis after the reign of Geikhatu (1291–5), it is not surprising that Ghazan, with the help and possible influence of local administrators, decided to implement a series of economic reforms across his territories. Women's *ordos* were of primary importance in these reforms and, as we see below, the limitation and appropriation of the *khātūns*' property and autonomy was one of the targets.

Ordo Number	First known owner	Assigner	Receiver of the *ordo*	Assigner	Receiver of the *ordo*	Assigner	Receiver of the *ordo*	Assigner	Receiver of the *ordo*
1	Doquz Khatun	Abaqa Ilkhan	Tuqtani Khatun	Geikhatu or Ghazan Ilkhan	Kokachin Khatun	Ghazan Ilkhan	Karamu Khatun	Öljeitü Ilkhan	Qutlughshah
2	Güyük Khatun	Abaqa Ilkhan	Qutui Khatun	Appropriated by Arghun after the succession struggle with Aḥmad Tegüder.					
3	Yesünjin Khatun	Abaqa Ilkhan	Padshah Khatun	No track of the *ordo* after her death. Possibly appropriated during Ghazan Kahn's reign.					
4	Doji Khatun	Abaqa Ilkhan	Nuqdan Khatun	Abaqa Ilkhan	El-Tuzmish Khatun (survived into the 14th century)				
5	Martai Khatun	Arghun Ilkhan	Tödai Khatun (Disputed by Aḥmad Tegüder). Ordo kept by Ghazan?						
6	Bulughan Khatun Bozorg	Arghun Ilkhan	Bulughan Khatun 'Moʿazzama' (Disputed by Geikhatu Ilkhan). Finally appropriated by Ghazan Ilkhan during the civil war against Baidu.						

Figure 4.2 The evolution of the *khātūns' ordos* in Ilkhanid Iran

The appropriation of ladies' wealth: Ghazan Khan's rise to power and economic reforms

Most of what we know regarding women's *ordos* and their economic activity is provided by Rashid al-Din, who, writing in the reign of Ghazan Khan, had a personal interest in underlining the role that these camps played in the economy of the Ilkhanate. Since he was responsible for designing and implementing the economic reforms of his patron, some information provided in his chronicle appears to be an attempt to justify some of Ghazan's actions when he was on the path to becoming Ilkhan.[216] Among these is the claim that the *ordo* of Bulughan Khatun 'Bozorg' was in reality given to Ghazan by his grandfather Abaqa.[217] According to Rashid al-Din, this happened at the same time that the young Ghazan was entrusted to Bulughan for his education and the lady kept the *ordo* and the future Ilkhan Ghazan throughout Tegüder Ahmad's reign (1282–4).[218] Abaqa died in 1282 and Bulughan married Arghun by the levirate system. The relevance of this *ordo* can be seen in the fact that, when the Persian vizier describes Bulughan's death in 1286, he offers an unusual description of the property held in the *ordo*.

> When he [Arghun] inventoried the storehouse of the deceased Bulughan Khatun, he took a few items of clothing and gold and silver utensils for himself. As for the rest, he said, 'These stores, yurt, and *ordu* belong to Ghazan by order of Abaqa Khan. They are to be sealed.' Those who had seen the storehouse reported that no one had ever possessed its like, for there were more jewels, utensils, and precious pearls therein than could be described. The reason for this is that, because Abaqa Khan loved Bulughan Khatun excessively, every time he went into the treasury he picked up a precious jewel and gave it to her in secret. When the treasurers pilfered things after Bulughan Khatun's death, Ghazan found out about it and was constantly asking for an investigation, but the treasury remained sealed.[219]

Rashid al-Din insists several times that when Bulughan Khatun 'Bozorg' died her *ordo* should be given to Ghazan Khan, and he suggests that this particular *ordo* included extensive properties, wealth and presumably people. Consequently, although Arghun married another woman of the same name (Bulughan 'Mo^{c}azzama') immediately after Bulughan 'Bozorg' had died, the property was not transferred to the new wife, but allegedly its treasures were sealed, reserved for Ghazan Khan and stored in Khurasan.[220] If this was the case, the practice of replacing the female head of an *ordo* with another woman was flouted and, though the new wife was made a *khātūn*, she received none of the riches. In the narrative, this anomaly is somehow justified by claiming that these properties

were treated differently because Abaqa foresaw in his grandson Ghazan a glorious fate as a ruler of Iran. Yet, when one looks at the rise of Ghazan Khan, other elements emerge that might explain not only Rashid's narrative about this camp but also the story itself as a means of justifying some of the economic reforms designed by the vizier.

When Geikhatu took control of the realm in 1291, he hurried to seize control of his father's female *ordos*, just as his predecessors had done before him. He married Padshah Khatun and El-Tuzmish Khatun from his father's appanage, but also took two wives from his brother and predecessor Arghun Khan. One was the Christian Örüg Khatun and the second one was Bulughan 'Mo^{c}azzama'. As we have seen, the first two held important *ordos* belonging previously to the mother of Abaqa and to Doquz Khatun respectively, which lent extra legitimacy to his claim to the throne. While the acquisition of these two camps seems to have been straightforward, the matter of Bulughan Mo^{c}azzama's *ordo* led to friction between the Ilkhan and his nephew Ghazan Khan. A son marrying his dead father's wives – and taking control of their *ordos* – was not a matter of great conflict among the Mongols of Iran. However, when a new ruler claimed the wives of his brothers and predecessors, the transmission of property from woman to woman may have threatened to undermine the financial basis of any future claim of those sons to the throne. Hence, the above-mentioned dispute between Tegüder and Arghun over Abaqa's wife Todai Khatun was to be repeated between Geikhatu and Ghazan over Bulughan 'Mo^{c}azzama'.

Geikhatu hurried to marry the disputed lady in July/August 1292 (Sha^{c}ban 691), which must have seemed like a setback for Ghazan Khan's aspirations to the throne.[221] It is suggested in the account that Geikhatu's underlying strategy was to incorporate this *ordo* into his own appanage and for that reason he 'refused to let Ghazan go to her'. Immediately, Ghazan went back to Khurasan, ensuring in this way that his uncle did not claim the properties of Bulughan 'Bozorg' left in that region.[222] However, in the narrative, Rashid al-Din tries to portray Geikhatu's actions as illegitimate and contrary to his father's (Abaqa's) will. This impression is given when it is said that the marriage between Geikhatu and Bulughan took place 'against her will', indicative of the new Ilkhan's wrongdoing. By contrast, Ghazan is praised for his patience in bearing his lot and waiting until the time comes to consummate his marriage to his father's wife.[223] This last statement, however, seems counterfactual. Rashid, writing a few years after the event, knew the outcome of the story. Instead of waiting, Ghazan had hurried to marry Kökechin Khatun, who had come from China accompanied by Marco Polo and was placed in the prestigious *ordo* of Doquz Khatun. By marrying this woman whom his father Arghun

had asked Qubilai to send from China (a woman of the same family as Bulughan 'Bozorg'), Ghazan had secured his claim to the *ordo*.[224]

The unfortunate economic measures carried out in Geikhatu's reign left the Ilkhanate in jeopardy after his death in 1295 when his cousin Baidu rebelled, killed him, and had himself crowned Ilkhan on 8 Jumada II 694 (25 April 1295).[225] At this point, Ghazan saw the opportunity he had been waiting for and marched from Khurasan into Tabriz to claim the throne. On the way, he added powerful amirs and princes to his cause and also, presumably, locals because he converted to Islam en route.[226] At a gathering of his growing band of allies, he complained about the support promised by Baidu, giving this as a reason to begin hostilities against his cousin. He claimed he was not receiving 'the camps, and the women, and the concubines of my father which he promised', suggesting that Baidu was trying to take control of the women and their camps and thus contravene the customary rules.[227] In order to avoid a civil war, the *noyans* of each side met at the *ordo* of the already mentioned Tödai Khatun and agreed on the distribution of territories and people. Under Ghazan's control were placed some members of the royal family and the revenues (*injü*) produced in east and south Iran. Although negotiations seemed to advance towards a peaceful resolution, the arrival of reinforcements from Baghdad for Baidu's army led to negotiations failing and Ghazan's *noyans* had to withdraw.[228]

The rearranged power balance that followed has been examined elsewhere; various amirs changed sides until Ghazan was powerful enough to overcome his cousin.[229] For the purposes of this book, though, it is important to recognise that, within this exchange of people and revenues, the *khātūns*' *ordos* appear to have played an important role. Rashid al-Din seems to find it important to mention the wealthy *ordo* of Bulughan again, stating that among those who deserted Baidu and joined Ghazan were the lady's pages (*ev-oghans*), and that the amirs

> decided to send to Prince Ghazan the *ordus* of Arghun Khan, the great lady Bulughan, Örug Khātūn, and Prince Kharbanda along with the other princes and to turn over his possessions and treasury. Furthermore, from the side of the Sapedrod [Safid-rud], Persia, Khurasan, Qumis, and Mazandaran would be Ghazan's, along with half of the region of Fars and the entirety of the *enchüs* there.[230]

Thus, Rashid al-Din's narrative turns again to the *khātūn*'s *ordo* to show that Ghazan's patience eventually paid off and that the revenues, servants and soldiers left by his grandfather came back into his possession to support his rise to the throne. The first action taken by the new ruler

after defeating his rival was to officially marry – in the Muslim fashion – Bulughan Khatun 'Moᶜazzama', thus closing the circle by gaining both the *ordo* and the 'replacement' wife of his father.[231] Ghazan's use of female resources in his struggle with Baidu might have made him aware – if he was not so already – of the wealth at the *khātūns*' disposal. Persian viziers like Rashid al-Din at the court of Ghazan might also have taken note. So, with the Ilkhanate submerged in financial problems in 1295, it is not surprising that the architects of the political and economic changes regarded the *ordos* of the *khātūns* as a crucial economic resource in need of reform.[232]

In one section of Rashid al-Din's *Jamiᶜ al-tawarikh*, he explains the reforms of the *khātūns*' *ordos*. This is not an extensive section, but provides some useful information. It starts by describing the anarchy among the *khātūns*' servants, who were accusing each other of corruption and stealing from the treasuries and revenues.[233] After putting all the servants and administrators of his predecessors on trial for corruption, Ghazan issued an order by which the revenues and maintenance of the ladies' *ordos* would fall under the jurisdiction and administration of the *ṣāḥib dīvān*. This man would be responsible for setting the levels of tax to be paid to the *khātūns* and for allocating the revenues of a specific district to a particular *khātūn*'s *ordo*.[234] The aim was to avoid the imposition of excessive taxation and the duplication of tax collectors (from different *ordos*) in the same region.[235] Under the supervision of the *ṣāḥib dīvān*, revenues were to be used only for maintaining the supply of horses, camels, cloth and food for the *khātūn*, and, in the event of a surplus, the money was to be sealed in the *khātūn*'s treasury to be used only 'in case of an emergency'.[236] The law had the clear goal of rationalising taxation and expenditure simultaneously, by placing them under the control of the *ṣāḥib dīvān*, which involved imposing limits on female economic power.

Apart from curbing the *khātūns*' economic autonomy, these measures seem to have been an attempt to reform the traditional manner in which ladies' *ordos* were passed on. Reporting measures to rectify problems in the transmission of ladies' *ordos* after the death of the ruler (of the kind that occurred with the accessions of Tegüder Ahmad and Geikhatu mentioned above), Rashid mentions that Ghazan 'endowed them [the properties of a *khātūn*'s *ordo*] to their male offspring, not the females. Those enchu (Injū) properties will henceforth be the enchu and property of the sons of that lady'. In addition, if the lady did not have sons – as was the case with Bulughan Khatun 'Bozorg' – the property would belong to the son of the deceased man by another of his wives.[237] Now, if we examine these regulations closely, we find a description of Ghazan's relationship with the *ordo*

of Bulughan Khatun 'Bozorg' and a validation of the rights of the new ruler over the extensive properties of the *khātūn*. The reforms expounded in Rashid al-Din's narrative validate the right of the chronicler's patron to take control of the revenues of his father's wives. It is difficult to estimate the proper scope of these reforms and to determine to what extent they were implemented in the Ilkhanate; there is general agreement, though, that they must have had an impact on the economy.[238] According to Rashid al-Din himself, in his time all the policies to control female revenues were implemented and all the responsibility rested with the office of the *ṣāḥib dīvān*. Rashid illustrates the organisation of the revenues and the usufruct of the *khātuns*' property by the court when he recounts that,

> recently, when there was a need for more funds for army supplies, he [Ghazan] ordered them to give a thousand-thousand dinars to the army from their [the ladies'] treasuries. In this way it was paid, and the army was greatly helped. Never in any era has there been such an arrangement.[239]

To a certain degree, the appropriation of resources from Mongol ladies by the central government did not stop with Ghazan, but continued into the reign of Abu Sa^{c}id (r. 1317–35), when Mustawfi mentions that the regent Amir Chopan imposed fines directly on Qutlughshah Khatun.[240] This is not to say that women's *ordos* disappeared from the Ilkhanate in the fourteenth century or that noble women did not retain some degree of economic independence.[241] What we have attempted to examine here is the extent to which Ghazan Khan and his viziers, commanded by Rashid al-Din, were successful in limiting the nature of women's involvement in the economy of that region. They did this primarily through changing the way in which the *khātūns*' *ordos* were passed on. This transformation in the economic status of the *khātūns* was an element in the process of centralisation that occurred in the Ilkhanate from the last decade of the thirteenth century onwards. There is, I would suggest, a relationship between this limiting of female economic power and the disappearance of the toleration of female regency in southern areas of the Mongol domains. This diminution of women's economic and political influence was part of the drive to centralise government and resources in order to create greater political, economic and religious unity in Mongol Iran.

Notes

1. T. T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 48.
2. My aim in this chapter is to explore the *ordo* as an economic entity. The

ongoing debate about the 'tribal model' and the connotations that this term had (and still has) in European historiography on Central Asia is not looked at here. See D. Sneath, *The Headless State: Aristocratic Orders, Kinship Society, and Misrepresentations of Nomadic Inner Asia* (New York, 2007), pp. 118–19.

3. *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. I. de Rachewiltz, 2 vols (Leiden and Boston, 2004) (hereafter, *SH*), p. 454. On the etymology of the word and a description of its meaning, see P. Pelliot, *Notes sur l'histoire de la Horde d'Or*, ed. L. Hambis (Paris, 1949), p. 30, fn. 1.
4. For example, Carpini uses the terms 'orda' and 'tent' as synonyms on certain occasions. See C. Dawson, *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London and New York, 1955), p. 54.
5. For the seasonal itinerary of Ögetei Khan in Mongolia, see J. A. Boyle, 'The Seasonal Residences of the Great Khan Ögedei', *Central Asiatic Journal* 16 (1972), pp. 125–31. Juvayni refers to members of the royal family coming from Central Asia for the election of Güyük as being 'from the ordu of Chaghatai'. See ᶜAlaᵓ al-Din ᶜAta Malik Juvayni, *Tārīkh-i jahān-gushā*, ed. M. Qazvini, 3 vols (Leiden and London, 1912–37) (hereafter, *TJG*), I, pp. 204–5/Juvayni, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, trans. J. A. Boyle, 2 vols (Manchester, 1958; reprint 1997 with foreword by D. O. Morgan) (hereafter, Boyle), p. 249. On another occasion, he refers to the *ordo* as the encampment of a particular member of the royal family; see *TJG*, I, pp. 215, 217/Boyle, pp. 260, 262.
6. C. P. Atwood, 'Ordo', in C. P. Atwood (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire* (New York, 2004). Allsen notes that the individual Mongol yurt was called *ordo ger*, which literally means 'camp tent'. See T. T. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 13; Sneath, *Headless State*, p. 72.
7. For example, Juvayni mentions that, at the time of Chinggis Khan's death, 'each man left his ordu and set out for the quriltai' that would elect the new Khan. See *TJG*, I, p. 144/Boyle, p. 183.
8. D. Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites and Turkish Rulers: A History of Isfahan in the Saljuqid Period* (London, 2009), pp. 75–101. On the nomadic lifestyle of the early Saljuqs, see A. Peacock, *Early Seljuq History: A New Interpretation* (London, 2010), pp. 89–98.
9. M. Biran, 'The Mongol Transformation: From the Steppe to Eurasian Empire', *Medieval Encounters* 10:1–3 (2004), p. 344; *SH*, p. 454.
10. Chih-chᶜang Li, *The Travels of an Alchemist: The Journey of the Taoist Chᵓang-Chᵓun from China to the Hindukush at the Summons of Chingiz Khan, Recorded by His Disciple Li Chih-Chᶜang*, trans. A. Waley (London, 1931), p. 71.

11. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 126.
12. Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325–1354*, ed. and trans. H. A. R. Gibb (London, 2005), p. 147.
13. D. Aigle, 'Iran under Mongol Domination: The Effectiveness and Failings of a Dual Administrative System', *Bulletin d'études orientales* 57:2 (2008), p. 74.
14. See the well-documented article by C. Melville, 'The Itineraries of Sultan Öljeitü, 1304–16', *Iran* 28 (1990), pp. 55–70.
15. C. Melville, 'The Keshig in Iran: The Survival of the Royal Mongol Household', in L. Komaroff (ed.), *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan* (Leiden, 2006), p. 161; see also C. P. Atwood, 'Ulus Emirs, Keshig Elders, Signatures, and Marriage Partners: The Evolution of a Classic Mongol Institution', in D. Sneath (ed.), *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth–Twentieth Centuries* (Bellingham, 2006), pp. 141–73.
16. See, for example, the case of Malik Temür (son of Ariq Böke), who benefited from capturing an *ordo* of one of his father's wives to obtain enough resources to be considered a powerful ally by Qaidu, a rival Mongol lord of Qubilai Khan. See M. Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of an Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* (Richmond, 1997), p. 41.
17. L. Krader, *Social Organization of the Mongol-Turkic Pastoral Nomads* (The Hague, 1963), p. 186; Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 96, 103. See also M. Rossabi, 'Khubilai Khan and the Women in his Family', in W. Bauer (ed.), *Studia Sino-Mongolica: Festschrift Fur Herbert Franke* (Wiesbaden, 1979), p. 154.
18. Rossabi, 'Khubilai Khan', p. 154.
19. For example, Ibn Battuta noticed that, when travelling, the *ordos* of the *khātūns* travelled separately from those of their husbands. See Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, A.D. 1325–1354*, trans./ed. C. Defrémery and B. R. Sanguinetti (French) and H. A. R. Gibb (English), vol. II (Cambridge, 1962) (hereafter, IB), p. 483.
20. Precedents of women being in charge of property have been identified among other Inner Asian societies such as the Liao-Khitan; see K. A. Wittfogel and J. Feng, *History of Chinese Society: Liao (907–1225)* (Philadelphia, 1949), p. 199; G. Vernadsky, 'The Scope and Contents of Chingis Khan's Yasa', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 3:3/4 (December, 1938), p. 357. The standard number of principal wives among the Mongols was four, although this number was not fixed across the empire. See S. Shir, 'The "Chief Wife" at the Courts of the Mongol Khans during the Mongol World Empire (1206–1260)' [in Hebrew], MA dissertation (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2006).
21. Rossabi, 'Khubilai Khan', p. 154.
22. This especially applies to concubines. See A. Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia: Aspects of Administrative, Economic and Social History* (New York, 1988), p. 293.

23. Krader, *Social Organization*, p. 188.
24. Krader, *Social Organization*, p. 188.
25. T. T. Allsen, 'Ever Closer Encounters: The Appropriation of Culture and the Apportionment of Peoples in the Mongol Empire', *Journal of Early Modern History* 1 (1997), p. 4.
26. C. P. Atwood, 'Appanage System', in C. P. Atwood (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire* (New York, 2004). See also B. Vladimirtsov, *Le régime social des Mongols: le feudalisme nomade*, trans. M. Carsow (Paris, 1948), pp. 123–6.
27. Although the figures might be relative, the *SH* mentions that she received 10,000 people including the share of Chinggis Khan's youngest brother Otchigin; see *SH*, §242. Rashid al-Din mentions than she received 8,000, of which only 3,000 belonged to her and the rest to her youngest son; see *JT*, I, p. 611 / Thackston, p. 281.
28. *SH*, § 242. It is mentioned, however, that she 'did not complain' about this.
29. See Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Jāmi*[c] *al-tawārīkh*, ed. M. Rawshan and M. Mūsavī, 4 vols (Tehran, 1373/1994) (hereafter, *JT*), I, pp. 75, 593–4, 613/ *Jami*[c]*u't-tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*, ed. S. S. Kuru and trans. W. M. Thackston, 3 vols (Boston, 1998) (hereafter, Thackston), pp. 43, 272–3, 282.
30. Allsen, 'Ever Closer Encounters', p. 6.
31. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 17–18.
32. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 95.
33. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 96.
34. R. E. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the 14th Century* (London, 1986), p. 168.
35. IB, p. 486.
36. IB, pp. 486–9.
37. He mentions that the Khan had many wives and sixty concubines. *JT*, I, p. 620/Rashid al-Din Tabib, *The Successors of Genghis Khan,* trans. J. A. Boyle (New York and London, 1971) (hereafter, *Successors*), p. 18; Fakhr al-Din Banakati, *'Tārīkh-i Banākatī': A General History from the Earliest Times to the 14th Century A.D.*, ed. J. She[c]ar (Tehran, 1378/2000) (hereafter, *TB*), p. 282.
38. See Chapter 2.
39. *JT*, I, p. 631/*Successors*, p. 27. Interestingly, Banakati comments that the mother of Qadam Oghul was called Qubayi (قوبایی). Maybe due to a mistake in the edition of the manuscript, she is not mentioned as a main wife; however, this might also suggest that, despite the confusion about the name, this son of Ögetei did not come from a chief *khātūn*. The name of the four *khātūns* according to Banakati are Buraqjin (بوراقجین), Turkina (تورکینه), Muka (موکا) and Jajin (جاجین). *TB*, p. 282.
40. There is a difference here between the two Persian editions of the *Jami*[c] *al-tawarikh*. While Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Jāmi*[c] *al-tawārīkh*, ed. B. Karimi, 2

vols (Tehran, 1367/1988–9) (hereafter, *JTK*) mentions that Chaghatai had eight sons (I, p. 533), the *JT* mentions only six (II, p. 751), omitting Qadaqai and Baiju. Their descriptions are also omitted from the *JT* edition.

41. The first one being the cousin of Chaghatai's mother Börte, whilst the second married him after the death of Yesülün. See *JT*, I, p. 752/*Successors*, p. 135.
42. *JTK*, I, p. 534/*Successors*, p. 136. In the *JT* (I, p. 759), the order of Chaghatai's sons is reversed and Mochi Yebe appears as the second instead of the first as in *JTK*.
43. M. Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian: Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*, trans. H. Yule, 2 vols (London, 1903) (hereafter, MP), I, p. 356.
44. *JTK*, II, pp. 612–15/*Successors*, pp. 241–5; *JT*, II, pp. 865–8. Rashid mentions at least seven wives who gave sons to Qubilai. There is a similar case in IB, p. 486.
45. M. Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 16.
46. Both Yesülün and Tögen had sons with Chaghatai, the former was the mother of 'all his chief sons', while the latter was the mother of Chaghatai's seventh son Qadaqai. See *JT*, I, p. 540/*Successors*, p. 144.
47. *JT*, II, p. 963.
48. L. J. Ward, '*Zafarnāmah* of Mustawfī', doctoral dissertation (Manchester University, 1983) (hereafter, *ZM*), pp. 206–7.
49. Shir, 'The "Chief Wife"; Y. Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship: Conversion and Sovereignty in Mongol Iran', PhD dissertation (University of Michigan, 2016), ch. 1.
50. See, for example, the reference to her *ordo* in Abu al-Qasim [c]Abd Allah ibn [c]Ali Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Ūljāytū*, ed. M. Hambly (Tehran, 1384/2005) (hereafter, *TU*), p. 7.
51. Her name was Malikeh. See *JT*, II, p. 1057/Thackston, p. 516.
52. *JT*, II, p. 1056/Thackston, p. 515.
53. Abaqa favoured Bulughan above Martai Khatun and Despina Khatun. Neither of them bore him a son and only the former gave the Ilkhan a daughter called Nujin. See *JT*, II, p. 1056/Thackston, pp. 515–16.
54. *JT*, II, p. 1212. The Mongols did not have problems with accepting the adoption of children by members of the royal family. See, for example, the adoption of Shigi Qutuqu by Chinggis Khan and Börte in *SH* §203 and the comments in *SH*, p. 769. See also P. Ratchnevsky, 'Šigi-Qutuqu, ein Mongolische Gefolgsmann im 12.–13. Jahrhundert', *Central Asiatic Journal* 10 (1965), pp. 87–120; I. de Rachewiltz *et al.* (eds), *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol–Yüan Period (1200–1300)* (Wiesbaden, 1993), pp. 76–9.
55. *JT*, I, pp. 1208–10/Thackston, pp. 590–1.
56. *JT*, II, p. 1215/Thackston, pp. 593–4. Banakati follows Rashid al-Din in his account of Ghazan's wives. See *TB*, pp. 450–1.

57. *JT*, II, p. 1289/Thackston, p. 644.
58. About her, we know that she was the sister of Mubarakshah, the son of Orghina Khatun from the Chaghataid Khanate. See *JT*, II, p. 1215/ Thackston, p. 593.
59. *JT*, II, p. 1215/Thackston, p. 593. Her name was Bulughan 'Mo^{c}azzama' and a short biography can be found in C. Melville, 'Bologān (Būlūgān) Kātun', *EIr*.
60. At least fifteen are mentioned in the *TU*, pp. 7–8, if we include Qutlughshah Khatun. It needs to be acknowledged here that reduced life expectancy suffered by the Mongols in Iran during the fourteenth century was another cause for the decrease in the number of Mongol royal family members. See J. M. Smith, 'Dietary Decadence and Dynastic Decline in the Mongol Empire', *Journal of Asian History* 34:1 (2000), pp. 35–52.
61. *TU*, p. 42. She had a son (not by Öljeitü) called Amir Shaykh ^{c}Ali, who had the esteem of Abu Sa^{c}id (اعتباری داشت) in the court; see Hafiz-i Abru, *Ẓayl-i Jāmi^{c} al-tawārīkh-i Rashīdī: shāmil-i vaqā$^{\supset}$i^{c}-i 703–781 hijrī-i qamarī*, ed. K. Bayani (Tehran, 1350/1971), p. 99/Hafiz-i Abru, *Chronique des rois mongols en Iran*, ed. and trans. K. Bayani, 2 vols (Paris, 1936), p. 76.
62. C. Melville, *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Il-Khanate, 1327–1337: A Decade of Discord in Mongol Iran* (Bloomington, 1999), p. 7.
63. Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 293. See also J. Aubin, *Émirs mongols et vizirs persane dans les remous de l'acculturation* (Paris, 1995).
64. While the ownership of livestock was private in nomadic societies, the pastures remained communal property. See A. M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, trans. J. Crookenden (Madison, 1994), pp. 123–6.
65. *TJG*, II, pp. 243–4/Boyle, p. 507.
66. *TJG*, II, pp. 244–5/Boyle, p. 508.
67. Nasir al-Din ^{c}Ali Malik was given the *tūmen* of Nishapur, Tus, Isfahan, Qom and Kashan; Siragh al-Din was named *ṣāḥib dīvān* with Baha al-Din Juvayni, and Iftihar al-Din was put in charge of the region of Qazvin. See Aubin, *Émirs mongols*, p. 19.
68. *JT*, II, p. 895/*Successors*, p. 265. There is also a reference to the marriage of Arghun Aqa to a daughter of an amir from the *ordo* of Yesü Möngke in Central Asia. See *TJG*, II, p. 250/Boyle, p. 513.
69. Melville, 'Keshig in Iran', p. 161.
70. See, for example, *JT*, I, p. 72/Thackston, p. 41.
71. See the execution of Esen Temür and his *amīr ordo* after their rebellion against Ghazan in 1296. *JT*, II, p. 1294/Thackston, p. 631.
72. *JT*, II, p. 1168/Thackston, p. 569.
73. *JT*, II, p. 1126/Thackston, p. 549. A similar intervention by the amirs of the *ordos* is mentioned in J. A. Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khans', in J. A. Boyle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran,* vol. V (Cambridge, 1968), p. 367.

74. *Khātūns* in Iran sometimes protected fugitives and dissidents. Some *amīr ordos* did this too; see *JT*, II, p. 1170/Thackston, p. 570; Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 291. Also Amir Injil, who was the *amīr ordo* of Bulughan Khurasani (wife of Ghazan Khan), protected Toghan until the wrath of the Ilkhan against him had decreased; see *JTK*, II, p. 929/Thackston, p. 637.
75. *TU*, p. 7.
76. MP, I, p. 356.
77. IB, p. 484.
78. IB, p. 484.
79. IB, p. 485.
80. The process of selecting women to act as advisors and administrators can be observed in the appointment of Fatima Khatun by Töregene during her regency. See Chapter 2.
81. Interestingly, It Kujujuk's *ordo* was separate from that of her father. It is not clear, however, whether the camp belonged to her or her husband (Isa Bek), who was the grand vizier of the Golden Horde. It seems that she commanded the *ordo*'s dependants. Ibn Battuta mentions that, when the lady called for her staff, the jurists, the qadis, and the sayyid and sharif Ibn ᶜAbd al-Hamid all came. See IB, p. 489. Chamberlains were noted in the *ordo* of Bayalun Khatun (a Byzantine princess and third wife of Uzbek Khan); see IB, p. 488.
82. For a general explanation of the role of the *bitikchis* (secretaries) in different periods of Mongol rule in Iran, see Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, pp. 52, 62, 209; A. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia: A Study of Land Tenure and Land Revenue Administration* (London and New York, 1953), pp. 84, 90, 447; G. Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen: Unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung älterer Neupersischer Geschichtsquellen, vor Allem der Mongolen- und Timuridenzeit*, vol. II (Wiesbaden, 1965), pp. 264–7.
83. Notice here the fact that concubines were in attendance to the chief wives. See Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 293.
84. See references to justice administration in ladies' *ordos* in *TJG*, II, p. 241/Boyle, p. 504; see also P. Ratchnevsky, 'La condition de la femme mongole au 12e/13e siècle', in G. Doerfer *et al.* (eds), *Tractata Altaica: Denis Sinor sexagenario optime de rebus altaicis merito dedicate* (Wiesbaden, 1976), p. 519.
85. *JTK*, I, p. 437/Thackston, p. 297.
86. T. T. Allsen, 'The Princes of the Left Hand: An Introduction to the History of the Ulus of Orda in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries', *Archivum Eurasiae medii aevi* 5 (1985–7), p. 27.
87. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*, p. 27.
88. It is mentioned that he gave to the Suldus Taqai the Jirgin branch of the Kerait people; *SH*, §186

89. These women are Ibaqa Beki and Sorghaghtani Beki respectively.
90. *SH*, §187. Similar examples can be observed during the defeat of other steppe factions such as the Merkits; see *SH*, §198. On the Tatars' extermination and the influence of women in saving some of their relatives, see *JT*, I, p. 83/Thackston, pp. 46–7.
91. Another appropriation of women by the victorious side after a battle occurred when the Mongols defeated the Tumat people, see *SH*, §241.
92. *SH*, §242; *JT*, I, p. 611/Thackston, p. 281. Just as the Khan distributed people, so he had the right to take them back. One such occasion involved Chinggis's brother Qasar, who was a potential rival to the Great Khanate. See *SH*, §244, and comments on p. 877.
93. On the influence of women in the Mongol army, see B. De Nicola, 'Women's Role and Participation in Warfare in the Mongol Empire', in K. Latzel, S. Satjukow and F. Maubach (eds), *Soldatinnen: Gewalt und Geschlecht im Krieg vom Mittelalter bis Heute* (Paderborn, 2010), pp. 95–112.
94. R. Dunnel, 'The Hsi Hsia', in D. Twitchett and H. Franke (eds), *The Cambridge History of China: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907–1368* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 206–14.
95. *JT*, I, p. 137/Thackston, p. 74.
96. *JT*, I, p. 593/Thackston, pp. 272–3.
97. See A. F. Broadbridge, 'Marriage, Family and Politics: The Ilkhanid-Oirat Connection', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26:1–2 (2016), p. 123. There is a famous reference in Juvayni to a daughter of Chinggis Khan (Tümälün) entering the city of Nishapur after the Mongol conquest; after massacring the majority of the prisoners, she took 400 of them for their craftsmanship and brought them to Turkestan. See *TJG*, I, pp. 139–40/Boyle, I, p. 177. On the veracity and the confusion generated in the sources about this event, see the commentary in Boyle's translation on pp. 174–5, fn. 1; De Nicola, 'Women's Role and Participation', pp. 101–2.
98. Her case is also mentioned in Sneath, *Headless State*, p. 175.
99. *JT*, I, p. 197/Thackston, p. 104. Jagambo was the father of Ibaqa Beki and the brother of the Ong Khan of the Kéraits. He was pardoned when Chinggis Khan conquered his people, but he later rebelled and was destroyed. See *SH*, §208.
100. *SH*, §208.
101. *JT*, I, p. 197/Thackston, p. 104.
102. The *SH* specifies that she did not lose her rank as chief wife of the Khan despite her being married to another man. This was a special privilege given to her which allowed her to maintain her hereditary rights. See *SH*, p. 791.
103. T. T. Allsen, 'Mongolian Princes and their Merchant Partners, 1200–1260', *Asia Major* 2:2 (1989), p. 93. D. Aigle, *The Mongol Empire between Myth and Reality: Studies in Anthropological History* (Leiden, 2015), p. 9.
104. See, for example, the present given by Chotan (mother of Börte) to Chinggis

Khan's mother when the marriage between their children was arranged, in *SH*, §96.

105. *TB*, p. 388; *TJG*, I, p. 168/Boyle, pp. 211–12.
106. IB, pp. 485–6. Textiles were another product for which there was a high demand among Mongol women; see Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*, p. 16.
107. See Allsen, 'Mongolian Princes', p. 93.
108. Khazanov distinguishes between two different kinds of trade among pastoral societies: one in which there is direct exchange of goods between nomadic and sedentary people and another in which the nomads act as mediators in exchanges between sedentary societies. See Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, p. 202.
109. Allsen, 'Mongolian Princes', p. 94; M. Rossabi, 'The Muslims in the Early Yüan Dynasty', in J. D. Langlois (ed.), *China under Mongol Rule* (Princeton, 1981), pp. 260–1.
110. *SH*, §182 and p. 657. For the presence of merchants from Bukhara in the court of Chinggis Khan mentioned in the *Yuan Shih*, see P. Pelliot, 'Une ville musulmane dans la Chine de nord sous les Mongols', *Journal Asiatique* 211 (1927), pp. 264–8.
111. *TJG*, I, p. 59/Boyle, pp. 77–8. Rashid al-Din also mentions Chinggis Khan dealing with Muslim merchants; see *JT*, I, pp. 472–3/Thackston, pp. 233–4.
112. Allsen, 'Mongolian Princes', p. 88. He refers to Juvayni in *TJG*, I, p. 60/Boyle, p. 78, but in this account only the sons (پسران), the *noyans* (نوینان) and the amirs (امرا) are mentioned, and no specific reference to women is made. The *khātūn* is mentioned in Rashid al-Din's version; see *JT*, I, p. 473/Thackston, p. 234.
113. *TJG*, I, p. 59/Boyle, pp. 77–8.
114. See, for example, how in 1236 Ögetei granted Sorghaghtani Beki those areas in Northern China conquered by Tolui. See W. Abramowski, 'Die Chinesischen Annalen von Ögödei und Güyük: Übersetzung des 2. Kapitels des Yüan-Shih', *Zentralasiatische Studien* 10 (1976), pp. 131–2, and 'Die Chinesischen Annalen des Möngke: Übersetzung des 3. Kapitels des Yüan-Shih', *Zentralasiatische Studien* 13 (1979), p. 16.
115. For a description of the city of Qaraqorum and the diversity of its inhabitants' origins, see Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 177–80. See also Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*, pp. 34–5, and 'Biography of a Cultural Broker: Bolad Ch'eng-Hsiang in China and Iran', in J. Raby and T. Fitzherbert (eds), *The Court of the Il-Khans 1290–1340* (Oxford, 1996), p. 130.
116. *TJG*, I, p. 192/Boyle, p. 236.
117. V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, 4 vols (Leiden, 1956–63), I, p. 45.
118. On the *yam* system, see D. O. Morgan, *The Mongols* (Cambridge, MA, 1986; rev. edn 2007), pp. 91–4; A. J. Silverstein, *Postal Systems in the Pre-Modern Islamic World* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 141–64.
119. Allsen, 'Mongolian Princes', p. 96.

120. For the taxation organised to maintain the *yam* system, see J. M. Smith, 'Mongol and Nomadic Taxation', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 30 (1970), p. 52.
121. I. de Rachewiltz, 'The *Hsi-Yu Lu* by Yeh-Lü Ch'u-Ts'ai', *Monumenta Serica* 21 (1962), pp. 1–128, pp. 189–216; T. T. Allsen, 'Mahmud Yalavach', in I. de Rachewiltz *et al.* (eds), *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200–1300)* (Wiesbaden, 1993), pp. 122–7.
122. Allsen, 'Mongolian Princes', p. 103.
123. This is the interpretation given by the Persian sources, which are generally more sympathetic to the Toluid branch of the Chinggisid family.
124. Rossabi, 'Muslims in the Early Yüan Dynasty', pp. 267–8.
125. See Rossabi, 'Khubilai Khan', p. 161.
126. *JT*, I, p. 665/*Successors*, pp. 55–6.
127. Sorghaghtani specifically asked Ögetei to give her a merchant, but the Khan was opposed. She used the name of her husband to change his mind. See *JT*, I, p. 789/*Successors*, p. 168.
128. See *JTK*, II, p. 1045. This fact is also mentioned by Allsen, 'Mongolian Princes', p. 103. On the term *ortoy* or *ortaq*, see Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, II, pp. 25–7.
129. The Angara River is nowadays in Russia and is the only river flowing out of the Baikal Lake to join the Yensei River into the Kara Sea, which is part of the Arctic Ocean.
130. *JT*, I, pp. 76–7/Thackston, p. 43.
131. D. O. Morgan, 'Persian Historians and the Mongols', in D. O. Morgan (ed.), *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and Islamic Worlds* (London, 1982), pp. 109–24.
132. *JT*, II, p. 810/*Successors*, p. 186.
133. *JT*, II, p. 861/*Successors*, p. 236.
134. Allsen, 'Mongolian Princes', p. 111. Juvayni reckons the imperial debt to the merchants at the time of Möngke's coronation in 1250 was 500,000 ingots. See *TJG*, III, p. 85/Boyle, II, p. 604.
135. There is evidence in Chinese sources of the ruin of the peasantry in Northern China due to the speculation of these courtly merchants. Farmers had to sell their property and even their wives and children to pay their debts to the *ortaqs*. See E. Endicott-West, 'Merchant Association in Yüan China: The Ortoy', *Asia Major* 2:2 (1989), p.149.
136. Allsen, 'Mongolian Princes', pp. 108–9.
137. Allsen, 'Mongolian Princes', pp. 104–5; Rossabi, 'The Muslims in the Early Yüan Dynasty', pp. 269–70.
138. For trading conditions prior to the reign of Möngke Khan, see Allsen, 'Mongolian Princes', pp. 104–5.
139. *TJG*, III, p. 79/Boyle, II, p. 600.
140. *JT*, II, p. 861/*Successors*, p. 236. These merchants were mostly Christian;

the clerics were more trusting of their coreligionists like the Byzantines or Ruthenians. See Allsen, 'Mongolian Princes', pp. 108–9.

141. See the case of Taydula/Tayitoghlï Khatun in M. Favereau, 'Sources vénitiennes pour l'histoire de la Horde d'Or: nouvelles perspectives de recherche', *Golden Horde Review* 1 (2016), pp. 45–6.
142. For a description of Ghazan's reforms, see Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, pp. 83–92; P. Petrushevsky, 'Rashid al-Din's Conception of the State', *Central Asiatic Journal* 14 (1970), pp. 148–62.
143. While Rashid al-Din tends to exaggerate the benefits of Ghazan's reforms, Vassaf and Mustawfi, for example, are more cautious in their description of the benefits of the new economic policies. See P. Petrushevsky, 'The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran under the Il-Khans', in J. A. Boyle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 494–500; Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, p. 92.
144. For a transcription and translation of this document, see M. Minovi and V. Minorsky, 'Nāṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī on Finance', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 10:3 (1940), pp. 755–89.
145. Anonymous, *Histoire de la Géorgie: depuis l'Antiquité jusqu'au XIXe siècle*, trans. M. Brosset (St Petersburg, 1849), pp. 519–20. On the fall of Baghdad and the appropriation of the caliph's treasury by the Mongols, see ᶜAbd al-Razzaq ibn Ahmad ibn al-Fuwati, *al-Ḥawādith al-jāmiᶜah*, ed. M. Jawad (Baghdad, 1932), pp. 325–8.
146. R. Amitai, 'Mongol Raids into Palestine (A.D. 1260 and 1300)', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2 (1987), pp. 236–55.
147. See *JT*, II, pp. 967–8, 1051–2/Thackston, pp. 474, 514.
148. *JT*, II, pp. 1064–5/Thackston, p. 520. A similar account can be found in Shirazi, Qutb al-Din Mahmud ibn Masᶜud, *Akhbār-i Mughūlān (650–683) dar anbānah-ʾi Mullā Quṭb: az majmūᶜah-ʾi khaṭṭī-i muvarrakh-i 685, Kitābkhānah-ʾi Āyat Allāh al-ᶜUẓmá Marᶜashī Najafī (Qum)* (Qom, 2010), p. 46.
149. See, for example, *TJG*, III, p. 7/Boyle, II, pp. 551–2; D. M. Dunlop, 'The Keraits of Eastern Asia', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 11:2 (1944), p. 285.
150. *ZM*, p. 17.
151. *JT*, II, pp. 1060, 1126/Thackston, pp. 517, 549.
152. *JT*, II, pp. 1195, 1331/Thackston, pp. 582, 660. The local administrators and the *ṣāḥib dīvān* also offered gifts to the ladies; *JT*, II, pp. 1323–4/Thackston, p. 661.
153. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*, p. 56. See also the allocation of money given to Abesh Khatun by Hülegü in ᶜAbd Allah ibn Fazl Allah Vassaf, *Taḥrīr-i tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, ed. ᶜA. M. Ayati (Tehran, 2004) (hereafter, *TV*), p. 113.
154. See, for example, the money given by Konchak Khatun, wife of Amir Irinjin, to the Nestorian church in the early fourteenth century. See

E. A. Wallis Budge (trans.), *The Monks of Kublai Khan, Emperor of China* (London, 1928) (hereafter, BS), pp. 304–5. Also Terken Qutlugh Khatun provided gifts to the influential personalities such as Arghun Aqa. See Anonymous, *Tārīkh-i Shāhī-yi Qarā-Khitā'iyān*, ed. M. I. Bastani Parizi (Tehran, 1976–7), p. 183.

155. On the taxation system of the Mongols, see among many others Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, pp. 79–99; Smith, 'Mongol and Nomadic Taxation', pp. 46–85; H. F. Schurmann, 'Mongolian Tributary Practices of the Thirteenth Century', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 19:3/4 (1956), pp. 304–89; Petrushevsky, 'Socio-Economic Condition', pp. 483–537; Morgan, *The Mongols*, pp. 87–90; D. Ostrowski, 'The "Tamma" and the Dual-Administrative Structure of the Mongol Empire', *Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies* 61:2 (1998), pp. 262–77.
156. Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 84.
157. *TJG*, II, pp. 253–4/Boyle, II, p. 516. On the difference between this 'Mongol poll tax', the 'Islamic poll tax' (*jizyah*) and their evolution in the Mongol Empire, see Petrushevsky, 'Socio-Economic Condition', p. 533.
158. On this, see Morgan, *The Mongols*, p. 88. The process seems to have occurred in both China and Iran; see T. T. Allsen, 'The Yüan Dynasty and the Uighurs of Turfan in the 13th Century', in M. Rossabi (ed.), *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th–14th Centuries* (London, 1983), p. 263.
159. For a discussion of the term, see Smith, 'Mongol and Nomadic Taxation', pp. 46–85.
160. J. Paul, 'Fiscal System III. Islamic Period', *EIr*.
161. The revenues produced from the implementation of these taxes varied and are difficult to assess; for an interpretation of the numbers, see Petrushevsky, 'Socio-Economic Condition', p. 499.
162. Petrushevsky, 'Socio-Economic Condition', p. 516.
163. For the allocation of lands and shares across the Mongol Empire, see T. T. Allsen, 'Sharing out the Empire: Apportioned Lands under the Mongols', in A. M. Khazanov and A. Wink (eds), *Nomads in the Sedentary World* (Richmond, 2001), pp. 172–90.
164. *JT*, II, p. 1110/Thackston, p. 541. On Qutui Khatun, see also *JT*, II, pp. 1064–5/Thackston, p. 520.
165. *JT*, II, p. 1507/Thackston, p. 745.
166. Aubin, *Émirs mongols*, p. 58. According to Mustawfi, Ghazan's reforms maintained the economic wellbeing of the *khātūns* by rearranging the *injü* system. See *ZM*, p. 429.
167. IB, p. 340.
168. See the reference to the transit of merchants from Iran to China and vice versa in Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abû'l-Faraj 1225–1286*, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge, 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1976; reprint, New Jersey, 2003) (hereafter, *Chronography*), p. 456; *JT*, II, pp. 1339–40/

Thackston, p. 668. On long-distance trade in this period, see R. S. Lopez, 'Les methods commercials des marchands occidentaux en Asie du XIe au XIVe siècle', in M. Mollat (ed.), *Colloque international d'histoire maritime* (Paris, 1970), pp. 343–8; J. Delumeau and J. Richard, 'Sociétés et compagnies de commerce en Orient et dans l'Océan Indien', *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 23:4 (1968), pp. 823–43; for the fourteenth century, see P. Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate a Political and Military History* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 252–3; N. Di Cosmo, 'State Formation and Periodization in Inner Asian History', *Journal of World History* 10:1 (1999), pp. 2–4.

169. Mustawfi suggests that one of the reasons why Möngke sent Hülegü against the Ismailis was because they were cutting the trading routes between Persia and Mongolia. See *ZM*, pp. 12–13.
170. *JT*, II, p. 1349/Thackston, p. 672.
171. *JT*, II, p. 1069/Thackston, p. 499.
172. *JT*, II, p. 1303/Thackston, p. 651.
173. From Rashid al-Din we can interpret that gifts and cattle were included among the resources that women invested in trade through the mediation of merchants. See *JT*, II, p. 1507/Thackston, p. 745.
174. M. Polo, *The Description of the World*, trans. A. C. Moule and P. Pelliot, 2 vols (London, 1938) (hereafter, MP2), I, p. 169.
175. Petrushevsky, 'Socio-Economic Condition', pp. 509–10. Also among these nobles was Rashid al-Din himself; he owned an impressive fortune and used to invest in trade, as did his Persian and Mongol counterparts. See Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Kitāb-i mukātibāt-i Rashīdī*, ed. M. Abarquhi and M. Shafi (Lahore, 1947), letter 36, pp. 220–40, or letter 34, pp. 183–207. Although there has been debate about the authenticity of these letters, it seems to me that either Rashid al-Din traded with the goods mentioned in the book or those who produced the letters in the Timurid period considered the participation of these personalities in trading activities a common practice. On the debate, see A. H. Morton, 'The Letters of Rashīd al-Dīn: Ilkhanid Fact or Timurid Fiction?' in R. Amitai and D. O. Morgan (eds), *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy* (Leiden, 1999), pp. 155–99; A. Soudavar, 'In Defense of Rashid-Od-Din and his Letters', *Studia Iranica* 32 (2003), pp. 77–122.
176. See A. P. Martinez, 'Regional Mint Outputs and the Dynamics of Bullion Flows through the Ilkhanate', *Journal of Turkish Studies* 8 (1984), pp. 147–73; Allsen, 'Ever Closer Encounters', p. 21.
177. On the trade in the region of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf in this period, see J. Aubin, 'Les princes d'Ormuz du Xiii au Xv siècle', *Journal Asiatique* 241 (1953), pp. 77–137.
178. *TV*, p. 100.
179. *JT*, II, pp. 936–7/*Successors*, p. 307.
180. Shabankaraʾi, *Majma*ᶜ *al-ansāb*, ed. H. Muhaddith (Tehran, 1363/1984) (hereafter, *MA*), pp. 215–16. It is not clear if this is the same Bibi Maryam who had a mausoleum built in the Omani city of Qalhat; see IB, p. 396.

181. Both Hülegü and Güyük Khatun were grandchildren of Chinggis Khan. For an explanation of marriage practices between cousins among the Chinggisids, see Broadbridge, 'Marriage, Family and Politics', pp. 122–3.
182. *TB*, pp. 411–2. As far as I am aware, she is not mentioned by Rashid al-Din or Mustawfi.
183. *JT*, II, p. 964/Thackston, p. 472.
184. See Figure 4.2.
185. *JT*, II, p. 1055/Thackston, p. 515.
186. Shir, 'The "Chief Wife"; Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship', ch. 1. However, although Juvayni and Mustawfi do not mention Doquz Khatun in their accounts, both Rashid al-Din and, later, Banakati do. See *JT*, II, p. 963/Thackston, pp. 471–2; *TB*, p. 411; *ZM*, pp. 206–7.
187. *JT*, II, p. 1055/Thackston, p. 515. Her name was Tuqtani Khatun of the Kerait people and she was the daughter of the Ong Khan's sister and a resident of Doquz's *ordo*. See *JT*, I, p. 119/Thackston, p. 65. On her, see also P. Pelliot, 'Le vrai nom de "Seroctan"', *T'oung Pao* 29:1/3 (1932), p. 49.
188. Rashid refers to Tuqtani observing the same customs and rituals (همان رسوم و آیین نگاه می داشت) as Doquz, from which we can infer that she also was a Christian. See *JT*, II, p. 963/Thackston, p. 472.
189. MP, I, p. 32; *JT*, II, p. 963/Thackston, p. 472; *TB*, p. 411.
190. The amount was 600,000, but the currency is unidentified. The sources mention the word عواای and عوال. See *JT*, II, p. 1289/Thackston, p. 644, fn. 1; *JTK*, II, pp. 937–8.
191. Melville, 'Bologān (Būlūgān) Kātun'; *JT*, II, p. 1215/Thackston, p. 593.
192. *JT*, II, p. 1322/Thackston, p. 660.
193. *JT*, II, p. 963/Thackston, p. 472; *TU*, p. 42.
194. *JT*, II, p. 963/Thackston, p. 472.
195. C. Melville, 'Abū Saᶜīd and the Revolt of the Amirs in 1319', in D. Aigle (ed.), *L'Iran face à la domination Mongole* (Tehran, 1997), pp. 89–120; *TU*, p. 42.
196. BS, p. 257.
197. See *TJG*, I, p. 29/Boyle, I, p. 40, fn. 1; *JT*, II, pp. 964, 1055/Thackston, pp. 472, 515.
198. The specific mention in Rashid al-Din's work that Güyük Khatun's *ordo* was given to Qutui suggest that Yesünjin's ordo was created ad hoc for her by her son Abaqa when she arrived in Iran. The sources are not clear in this respect. See *JT*, II, p. 964/Thackston, p. 472.
199. *JT*, II, pp. 1055, 1098/Thackston, pp. 515, 536; Nasir al-Din Munshi Kirmani, *Simṭ al-ulā lil-Ḥaẓrat al-ᶜulyā dar 'Tārīkh-i Qarā-khitāʾīyān-i Kirmān'*, ed. ᶜA. Iqbal (Tehran, 1362/1983–4), p. 71; *TV*, p. 165. All these sources mention that Padshah was an official wife and that she became a chief *khātūn*. The only exception is *MA*, p. 200, as has been noted by N. Dalkesen, 'Gender Roles and Women's Status in Central Asia and

Anatolia between the 13th and 16th Centuries', doctoral dissertation (Middle East Technical University, 2007), p. 178, fn. 502.

200. This is a suggestion; we cannot be certain about the origin of these women's *ordos*.
201. *JT*, I, p. 88/Thackston, p. 49.
202. *TU*, p. 7; *JT*, II, p. 1055/Thackston, p. 515. Her name appears in different forms: Thackston transcribes it as Eltuzmish, while Boyle gives El Tutmish from Rashid's (إِیلتوٌزمیش). In the *TU*, it appears as Letermish (لترمیش).
203. On her, see *TU*, p. 7.
204. *JT*, II, pp. 1317, 1320/Thackston, pp. 658, 660.
205. Rashid mentions that she was the sister of Musa because they shared the same father, but it is not clear whether Martai was also the daughter of Chinggis Khan's daughter Tümälün. See *JT*, II, p. 1056/Thackston, p. 515.
206. According to Rashid, one of the disputes between the two rivals was the desire of Tegüder Ahmad to marry Tödai Khatun, which clashed with Arghun's right to marry his father's wives. See *JT*, II, pp. 1139–48/ Thackston, pp. 556–9.
207. *JT*, II, p. 1163/Thackston, p. 566. On the diplomatic usage of the *ordo*, see *JT*, II, p. 1248/Thackston, p. 615.
208. She was El-Qutlugh, a concubine of Jumghur's, whom Ahmad had made an official wife; see *JT*, II, p. 1122/Thackston, p. 547.
209. *JT*, II, p. 1056/Thackston, p. 515.
210. *JT*, I, p. 188/Thackston, p. 97; on her daughter Malika, see *JT*, II, p. 1057/ Thackston, p. 516.
211. On this episode, see *JT*, II, pp. 1141–6/Thackston, pp. 556–8.
212. Hamd Allah Mustawfi Qazvini, *The Geographical Part of the 'Nuzhat al-Qulūb' Composed by Hamd Allah Mustawfi of Qazwin in 740 (1340)*, trans. G. le Strange (Leiden and London, 1915–19; reprint 2008), p. 69; Melville, 'Bologān (Būlūgān) Kātun'; R. Zipoli, 'The Tomb of Arghūn', in *Primo Convegno Internationale sull'Arte dell'Iran Islamico* (Venice and Tehran, 1978), pp. 7–37.
213. On Bulughan Khatun 'Mo[c]azzama', see Melville, 'Bologān (Būlūgān) Kātun'.
214. On Bulughan Khatun 'Mo[c]azzama', see Figure 4.2; *TU*, p. 89.
215. See, for example, how a general of Tegüder Ahmad plundered the *ordo* of Arghun's chief wife, Qutlugh Khatun, when he knew of his rebellion. See *JT*, II, p. 1140/Thackston, p. 556. Similarly, the *ordo* of Qutui Khatun was sacked by Arghun after defeating Tegüder Ahmad. *JT*, II, pp. 1147–8/ Thackston, p. 559.
216. D. O. Morgan, 'Cassiodorus and Rashīd al-Dīn on Barbarian Rule in Italy and Persia', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 40:2 (1977), p. 314.
217. *JT*, II, p. 1212/Thackston, p. 592.
218. *JT*, II, pp. 1212–13/Thackston, p. 592.

219. *JT*, II, p. 1213/Thackston, p. 593.
220. It is interesting that Ghazan complained about robberies from this treasury performed by those in charge of the *ordo* after the death of Bulughan 'Bozorg'. See *JT*, I, p. 1213/Thackston, p. 593.
221. *JT*, II, pp. 1212–14/Thackston, pp. 592–3. She even gave him a son, Ching Pulad; see *TB*, p. 447.
222. It is in this period that Ghazan forged his alliance with Amir Nawruz. See the different versions of the episode in *JT*, II, pp. 1236–44/*JTK*, II, pp. 867–78/Thackston, pp. 605–13.
223. *JT*, II, p. 1214/Thackston, p. 593.
224. *JTK*, II, p. 869/Thackston, p. 606.
225. Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History', pp. 374–5; for the exact date, see C. Melville, 'From Adam to Abaqa: Qâdî Baidâwî's Rearrangement of History (Part 2)', *Studia Iranica* 36:1 (2007), p. 17; alternative dates in *TV*, p. 160; *Chronography*, p. 500.
226. A summary of the campaign can be found in Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History', pp. 376–80. On the possibility of Ghazan's conversion being politically motivated, see R. Amitai, 'Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition: A View from the Mamluk Sultanate', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 59:1 (1996), p. 1.
227. *Chronography*, p. 504.
228. Aubin, *Émirs mongols*, p. 58.
229. For an explanation of this process, see Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History', pp. 377–9; Aubin, *Émirs mongols*, pp. 56–60; Baidu was eventually defeated and killed in October–November 1295. See Abuʾl-Fidaʾ, *The Memoirs of a Syrian Prince: Abuʾl-Fidāʾ, Sultan of Hamah (672–732/1273–1331,* trans. P. M. Holt (Wiesbaden, 1983), p. 24; see also Melville, 'From Adam to Abaqa, Part 2', pp. 16–17.
230. *JT*, II, p. 1249/Thackston, p. 615; TB, p. 455.
231. Ghazan had a son (Alchu) and a daughter (Oljay Qutlugh) by her, who eventually became the chief wife of Abu Saʿid. See *TU*, p. 82; Kamal al-Din ʿAbd al-Razzaq Samarqandi, *Maṭlaʿ-i saʿdayn va majmaʿ-i baḥrayn*, ed. A. Navaʾi (Tehran, 1372/1993), p. 54; Melville, 'Bologān (Būlūgān) Kātun'.
232. On the state of the economy and the problems of the court in exacting revenues from the provinces, see Aubin, *Émirs mongols*, pp. 62–3. According to Petrushevsky, 'Socio-Economic Condition', pp. 491–4, one of the reasons for the economic crisis in this period was the conflict between a 'nomadic' and a 'Persian' understanding of administration.
233. *JT*, II, pp. 1507–8/Thackston, pp. 744–5.
234. *JT*, II, p. 1508/Thackston, p. 745.
235. Interesting in this is the anecdote narrated by Rashid al-Din in which gangs in the markets threatened wealthy merchants and nobles, demanding money. He points out that some of these groups were connected to *khātūns*,

suggesting a thirst for money in the Mongol *ordos* prior to Ghazan Khan. See *JT*, II, p. 1538/Thackston, p. 761.

236. *JT*, II, p. 1508/Thackston, p. 745.
237. *JT*, II, p. 1509/Thackston, p. 745.
238. R. Amitai, 'Turko-Mongolian Nomads and the Iqṭā System in the Islamic Middle East (ca. 1000–1400 CE)', in A. M. Khazanov and A. Wink (eds), *Nomads in the Sedentary World* (Richmond, 2001), p. 153; D. O. Morgan, *Medieval Persia, 1040–1797: A History of the Near East* (New York, 1988), pp. 75–6; Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, pp. 115–29; I. Miller, 'Local History in Ninth/Fifteenth Century Yazd: The "*Tārīkh-i Jadīd-i Yazd*"', *Iran* 27 (1989), p. 78.
239. *JT*, II, p. 1509/Thackston, p. 745.
240. Hamd Allah Mustawfi Qazvini, *The 'Ta'rikh-i-Guzida': or 'Select History' of Hamduʾllah Mustawfí-i-Qazwini*, ed. and trans. E. G. Browne, 2 vols (Leiden and London, 1910–13), p. 148.
241. Attested to by the endurance of some *ordos* like those of El-Tuzmish, Qutlughshah Khatun and Baghdad Khatun, mentioned above. Toghanchuq (also Toghan), who was Abaqa's daughter and Amir Nawruz's wife, had an *ordo* which played an important role in diplomacy and in the redistribution of wealth in Khurasan. See *JT*, II, p. 1243/Thackston, p. 612.

5

Mongol Women's Encounters with Eurasian Religions

Although there is an extensive secondary bibliography dealing with different aspects of religion in the Mongol Empire,[1] it is relevant to highlight the fact that the Mongols had their own native set of beliefs and practices generally referred to as shamanism that were shared by the majority of the nomadic societies of North Asia. As the empire grew, the Mongols' own religious milieu came into direct contact with those of the conquered populations. This encounter highlighted not only the similarities and differences between them but played a role in shaping the religious landscape of the Mongol Empire. In this context, the present chapter looks at the interaction between women and religion in different areas of the empire in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

This encounter between the Mongols' understanding of religion and the faiths of the conquered populations triggered changes in the beliefs of both the Mongol rulers and the subject populations, and the resulting interaction between these two parties has been interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, some scholars have seen the Mongols as exploiters of religion for political purposes.[2] The attitude of the conquerors is seen as being governed by realpolitik, with a religion being favoured or persecuted simply in order to control the subject population.[3] On the other hand, some studies have suggested that the pre-imperial Mongol worldview might have played a role in guiding their preferences towards a particular religion, or at least towards a particular sect or school within a given creed. As is generally the case with historical writing, both arguments seem to have solid foundations depending on where and when the historians have looked for evidence.

Ever since the confrontation between Chinggis Khan and the shaman Teb-Tengri in the early stage in the formation of the empire, the Mongols recognised the political threat powerful religious leaders could present to the political supremacy of Mongol khans.[4] When Chinggis Khan arrived in Bukhara during the first Mongol invasion of Central Asia, he entered the Friday mosque, expelled the religious leaders from the building and

claimed from the pulpit that he was there because he was 'the punishment of God'.[5] We will never know for certain whether Chinggis Khan actually made this speech, but the removal of the religious officials from the scene and the situating of the Khan in the pulpit is a powerful image used by the Persian historian Juvayni and which illustrates the impact that the Mongol conquest had on Eurasian religions.[6]

Despite this example, the Mongols are generally considered to have been tolerant of religions, allowing freedom to cults and favouring religions as far as its followers did not challenge Mongol political supremacy.[7] However, its selective use of religious favouritism as a way to control conquered populations has also been documented throughout the empire.[8] This strategy was applied, for example, in Iran, where Christians and even Jews acquired important positions in government, at least until Ghazan Khan's conversion in 1295.[9] But, religion in the Mongol Empire was also characterised by the rulers' rejection of it in any institutionalised form. Arguably, the reason for this may have been the Mongol strategy of preventing religious leaders from developing any political structures that might grow to rival the emperor's power. Perhaps there was also an internal Mongol component in this attitude, one rooted in the native shamanism-Tenggerism of Siberia and Mongolia.[10] By 'shamanism' we are not here referring to the *perennialist* concept advanced by Mircea Eliade in his famous work.[11] On the contrary, the term shamanism here concerns the group of practices that were customary among the Mongols in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[12] The role of the shaman (*böö* or *böge*) or shamaness (*idugan* or *iduyan*) was not clearly defined at the time of Chinggis Khan, or it could simply be that the information we have is scant and confusing. There is agreement among scholars that shamanism did not have an organised church in pre-imperial Mongolia and that the shamans were closely related to Christian priests, Buddhist monks and, later, Muslim shaykhs in the Mongol *ordos*.[13]

The rejection of institutionalised religion can be also observed in the adoption of Christianity by some Mongol groups, narrated by the Nestorian monk Bar Hebraeus as being an act lacking any submission to an ecclesiastical authority.[14] Similarly, with regard to the adoption of 'Chinese religions' such as Taoism and Buddhism, the Mongols avoided subordinating themselves to institutionalised religion. This might explain their early favouring of the Quanzhen sect of Taoism, an incipient branch of this school of thought that did not require the khan to subordinate himself in any way to the master of the order.[15] A reflection of the clear subordination of religion to the Khan can be observed in the travels of the Taoist monk Changchun from Northern China to Central Asia to

meet with Chinggis Khan. In the document that survived to our day, it is clearly mentioned that the old monk was not simply invited but ordered to travel to meet the Great Khan. It is recorded in the *Hsi Yu Chi* that for the master to refuse was 'out of the question'.[16] Thus, the power relationship between religious leader and khan was clear from the very beginning, with the Mongol conqueror commanding the deeds of the respected Taoist master.[17]

However, the 'accommodation' of the Mongols towards Chinese religion, or rather the Mongol search for a religion for 'Mongol China', was not a straightforward process. One of the ways in which the new rulers tried to choose a religion and simultaneously shape it was by organising religious debates between Taoist and Buddhist scholars.[18] It seems that Lamaist Buddhism offered the best means of accommodating the new conquerors in the religious milieu of conquered China. Though they had favoured Lamaism since the appointment of Phags-Pa Lama as state preceptor in 1268, the Mongols did not neglect the other Chinese traditions.[19] The debates and the changing preferences for different religions among successive Mongol leaders seem to have been contributory factors in preventing the emergence of a religious tradition with enough power to rival the ruler's authority.[20] Whether this process was conscious or unconscious is difficult to assess, but it served the Mongols, helping them to keep religion under its 'secular' power, beginning with Chinggis Khan and Teb-Tengri and continuing into the Yuan dynasty.

When it came to dealing with Islam, the narratives concerning Chinggis Khan's conquest of Central Asia underline a dual strategy of disregard for the *ᶜulamāʾ* and the favouring of particular Muslim scholars.[21] During the first invasion, the Mongols engaged in contact with the Ismailis of Alamut, a branch of Islam that had both an institutionalised organisation and political control over territories in Iran.[22] The relationship between the conquerors and the Ismailis seems to have been, at first, one of military collaboration in the face of a common enemy: the Khwarazmshah Sultan Jalal al-Din (r. 1220–31).[23] But this political understanding came to an end when the Mongols decided to advance into the Middle East and secure control over regions under Ismaili influence. Under the reign of Möngke Khan (r. 1251–9), Hülegü carried out a military expedition to Iran, progressively enlisting the support of regional dynasties such as the Karts of Herat and the Qutlughkhanids of Kerman. In the course of this advance, even the Ismailis sent emissaries to Hülegü to offer their submission.[24] Persian sources mention that the decision to destroy the castle of Alamut was based on Möngke Khan's realisation that 'assassins' in the service of Alamut had infiltrated the Mongols.[25] Nonetheless, if it had been Hülegü's

plan to stay in the Middle East, then the destruction of the Ismailis would have had a dual purpose. First, it would have removed their political opposition and, second, it would have accorded the Mongols the support of other local dynasties in Iran, thereby granting legitimacy to their rule.[26]

The removal from the political scene of any powerful religious authorities opened up the Middle East to the spread of other religions such as Nestorian Christianity and Buddhism.[27] But, the removal of institutionalised religion from the region also created the opportunity for other interpretations of Islam to flourish. It is hardly a coincidence that Sufism started to spread across the Middle East and Central Asia from the eleventh century onwards. The arrival of the Saljuq dynasty (c. eleventh to thirteenth centuries) in the region, an Islamised semi-nomadic branch of the Turkic people, saw the slow but steady development of this mystical aspect of Islam. The Mongols accelerated the process.[28] Sufism seems to have undergone a progressive process of institutionalisation, in which followers of a particular religious leader became the founders of Sufi orders (*ṭarīqa*, plural *ṭuruq*), but did not become fully structured until the fourteenth century.[29] Since the time of Tegüder Ahmad's reign, and especially after Ghazan Khan's conversion to Islam, members of the Mongol royal family were in close contact with Sufi masters.[30]

To summarise, the Mongol native religion before the rise of Chinggis Khan has generally been described as a 'polytheism, the belief in a supreme deity, an armed equestrian deity, veneration of Heaven, Earth, Water and Fire, the worship of ancestors, meditation in the form of shamanistic practices, both human and domestic animal sacrifice, etc'.[31] But, as important as these practices was the lack of the sort of organised church and priesthood structure that was present among the sedentary societies that they conquered. Perhaps because of this native conception of religion and the avoidance of a religious opposition to their political supremacy, the Mongols favoured the rise of a new sect of Taoism (the Quanzhen sect), reinforced Nestorianism (a less hierarchical form of Christianity than its Catholic counterpart), developed Tibetan Buddhism and supported the presence of mystical interpretations of Islam (Sufism) in the Middle East and Central Asia. This triggered a new religious situation, especially in the Middle East, where minority forms of religion such as Christianity or Buddhism could, at least initially, gain adepts and privileges. It also generated the establishment of popular forms of religion within Islam that rapidly engaged with the new ruling elite. It was this political use of religion together with the flowering of non-institutionalised forms of religion that formed the religious environment where Mongol women lived.

Personal Involvement of Women in Religion: Religiosity and Interaction with Religious Leaders from Shamanism to Islam

Women were a presence in the religious milieu of the Mongols before the rise of Chinggis Khan in the form of goddesses and in the worship of female ancestors. With regard to goddesses, Allsen has noted that, particularly among the Mongols of the White and Golden Hordes of the Russian Steppe, the religious system was based on a duality of gods represented by Köke Möngke Tengri (Eternal Blue Heaven) and Nachighai/Etügen, who ruled over the 'seventy-seven earthly gods'.[32] The interesting part of this heaven–earth representation is that the second god was 'always personified as female and bears the epithet *eke,* or "mother"'.[33] Concerning ancestor worship, there is an interesting account of Chinggis Khan performing rituals in honour of his female ancestor Alan Qo'a that signifies the relevance of women in the Mongol religious milieu.[34] These rituals were performed through shamans who acted as intermediaries between these deities and the people. Shamans were generally held in high regard because they could deliver prophecies, divinations and omens, and make sacrifices to the ancestors.[35] These rituals included bone-burning, veneration of heaven, water, earth and fire, and dancing and chanting, among other things, all activities similar to those performed by other pastoral groups in ancient and medieval times.[36]

Shamanesses and women actively participating in the religious rituals have been recorded since the earliest known hisotry of the Mongol people.[37] The best-documented example of this concerns the dispute between Hö'elün and the wives of Ambaqai after the death of Temüjin's father, which was mentioned in Chapter 1. As we saw, the anecdote concerning the displacement of Temüjin's mother from the ritual has a political interpretation, but over and above this it indicates the role that noble women might have had in performing religious rituals among the Mongols in pre-imperial times.[38] Yet, in this early period, there is no clear definition of the role of shamans, making it difficult to assess the degree of women's involvement in shamanic practices beyond the example of Hö'elün.[39]

If evidence for the presence of women shamans in the early empire is scarce, episodes of female religious involvement are more frequently documented.[40] One example appears in *The Secret History of the Mongols*, which mentions how the Naiman lady Gürbäsü she asked for the head of the Kerait Ong Khan to be brought to her so that she could perform a sacrifice in his honour.[41] Other episodes of divination and shamanism during the period of Mongol expansion can be found in the sources, in which women's involvement usually acquires a negative connotation.[42] Women

are not usually involved though, whilst any involvement they do have generally acquires a negative connotation. For instance, both the Muslim and Christian chroniclers accuse those Mongol women who engage directly in shamanic rituals of being sorcerers and witches, using these accusations to discredit their political capability. For example, in imperial times, Fatima Khatun, the counsellor of the empress Töregene Khatun, was accused of witchcraft. She was charged with causing the illness of Köten, the son of Ögetei, who openly opposed the policies of the two women. When Köten died, Güyük Khan, who was about to take control of the empire, was forced by his minister Chinqai to question Fatima about this accusation. She confessed under torture and was brutally executed.[43] Christian sources narrate the story, emphasising that the accusations of sorcery are false, thereby implying that Güyük's decision to execute his political rival caused strife between mother and son.[44] In the politically turbulent decade of the 1240s, the same accusations were brought against other female member of the royal family, such as the second empress of the Mongol Empire Oghul Qaimish (r. 1248–50). Rubruck mentions he had heard from Möngke Khan's 'own lips' that Oghul 'was the worst kind of witch and that by her sorcery she had destroyed her whole family'.[45] One cannot know if the account of the sorcery came directly from the Khan himself, but it seems clear that the perception in Möngke's court, especially among the Christian subjects that Friar William met there, was that there was a link between these powerful women and practices of sorcery and witchcraft.[46]

Executions of women based on accusations of sorcery were not restricted to the 1240s. Charges of treason and sorcery were used by Hülegü in Iran to execute Balaqan, a male descendant of Jochi, just before the enmity between the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde broke out in the early 1260s.[47] Another example involves the death of the Ilkhan Arghun in 1291. One explanation of his rapid illness and death was the medicine provided by Buddhist monks. The close relationship that the ruler had with this religion led him to take some 'medicine' from an Indian monk famous for his longevity in the hope of prolonging his own life. Arghun took the elixir for nine months, but eventually developed a chronic illness that may have been responsible for his death.[48] The shamans of the court claimed that the Ilkhan's death was due to sorcery, highlighting some inter-religious tensions in the court of Arghun. On this occasion, a woman (Toghachaq Khatun) was found to be responsible and, after being tortured, 'she and a number of other women were cast into the river'.[49]

The scant information we have on the relationship between women and shamanism points towards a twofold phenomenon. On the one hand,

it appears that some women were allowed to perform religious rituals as shamans and actively participated in the liturgy of this religion. On the other hand, this same involvement in religious rituals appears to have been used politically as the empire began to expand, with accusations of sorcery and witchcraft generally being used to justify political agenda as described in both the Christian and Muslim sources. We might only be scratching the surface of the relationship between women and 'shamanism' in this period, since the evidence in the written material available is scarce and difficult to interpret. However, as the empire grew and other regions were incorporated into the Mongol domains, the information becomes more varied and women's presence in the religious milieu of the empire becomes more visible.

First encounters: female religiosity in the face of Eastern Christianity and Chinese 'religious' traditions

The quick expansion of the empire in the first half of the thirteenth century put women into contact with other Eurasian belief systems. Some of these religions such as Buddhism and Nestorian Christianity were known in the Steppe before Chinggis Khan's expansion.[50] For this reason, it is not surprising that most early female religiosity was articulated around these two faiths. Yet the information regarding female interaction with 'Chinese' religions such as Taoism and Buddhism is rather limited. There is, however, the already mentioned meeting between Chinggis Khan and the Taoist master Changchun held in Afghanistan in 1221 after the Mongol Khan has temporarely abandoned his camp in Central Asia to pursue his military campaigns against the pockets of resistance of the Khwarazmshah empire. This direct contact and some of the early policies in the Mongol Empire towards this particular Taoist sect (referred to generally as the Quanzhen sect) suggest certain initial favouritism from the Mongols towards this religious branch. However, there are no references to a continuous interaction between this sect and any Mongol women.[51] Only a passing reference is made in this account to presents sent by two princesses who were living in Chinggis Khan's camp in Afghanistan to Changchun. Yet, neither of them were Mongols, since one was the daughter of the Tangut ruler and the other a princess of the former Jin dynasty of Northern China.[52] It appears that at this stage Taoism remained a 'foreign' religion to the Mongols and that the *khātūns* did not pay much attention to this holy man.

Buddhism was more successful than its Taoist competitor, but it had to wait a few years until Qubilai Khan was named Great Khan and his

wife Chabui became empress of the Yuan dynasty of China to make a real impact in the decision-making of the empire.[53] Chabui was a 'fervent Buddhist and was, in particular, attracted by Tibetan Buddhism',[54] but despite having a short biography about her in the *Yuan Shih*, nothing about her personal religious life is mentioned.[55] That is, she actively promoted this branch of Buddhism to her husband, eventually tipping the balance in its favour over its rival Taoism,[56] but although her proximity to the Tibetan lamas is manifest, no references to her involvement in religious rituals or her beliefs have come to us.[57] Our access to Chinese sources in the production of this work was rather limited, which might explain the dearth of descriptions of Mongol women's religiosities in Yuan China, and perhaps other studies can complement this short reference here. Hence, our attention is focused on the westward expansion of the Mongols, for which we have access to more source material, in our search for a more personal involvement of women in religion.

When we turn to Christian sources, the information about women is more abundant. As early as the 1940s, scholars noted that Christian women had been present among the Mongols; Douglas M. Dunlop observed that they belonged mostly to the Kerait people.[58] Probably due to the high position that the Keraits held in the political balance of the steppes prior to the military expansion of the Mongols, many of these women were married to members of the royal family, with the Jochids and Toluids, respectively the lines of the eldest and youngest sons of Chinggis Khan, being those with more intermarriages with Kerait women.[59] For example, Sorghaghtani Beki, Doquz Khatun and Ibaqa Beki had left indication of their intervention in political affairs where religion was involved in the Mongol Empire.[60] However, the relationship between these women and Christianity was not limited to the political use of the religion, there was also a personal dimension.

There is a constant anxious need in the Christian sources to emphasise the commitment of the *khātūns* towards their Christian faith.[61] Similarly, Muslim sources make references to female affiliation to Christianity but highlight, wherever possible, their support for Islam.[62] The majority of sources refer to politically influential Christian women among the Mongols, but they also mention isolated cases of women directly interacting with Christian priests and engaging in rituals. For example, Marco Polo mentions that a divination ritual was carried out by a Nestorian priest in the tent of one of Chinggis Khan's wives that foretold the victory of the Mongol ruler over the Ong Khan of the Keraits. Clearly trying to convey an idea of favouritism towards Christianity by Chinggis Khan, the Venetian traveller mentions that since then Chinggis Khan 'found the Christians

to tell the truth, he always treated them with great respect, and held them for men of truth for ever after'.[63] The story might have been a fabrication made by Polo a posteriori, yet what is relevant to us is the fact that these priests seem to have been in the *ordos* of the Khan's wives, their services being requested when an omen was needed. In one of the stories attributed to Bar Hebraeus, it is mentioned that Chinggis Khan had a dream in which a religious man appeared to him offering him success in his conquering enterprises. Chinggis Khan went to one of his Christian wives, a daughter of the Ong Khan, who recognised from her husband's description of the 'bishop' the man who had attended her father.[64] This Nestorian priest is identified as 'Rabbanta' by Vincent of Beauvais, who adds that the priest was in attendance in the *ordo* of this lady.[65] The story cannot be found in other sources and, because Chinggis Khan was not married to a daughter of the Ong Khan, we have to question its veracity.[66] However, if the author of this source was trying to make a connection between Chinggis Khan and Christianity for propaganda purposes, he would have done so by creating a context which was more credible so that his narrative would be convincing. Consequently, even if they never occurred, the events of this story offer an example of the proximity between the wives of Mongol khans and religious leaders that is documented in a variety of Christian accounts.

The reign of Möngke Khan (r. 1251–9) was also an interesting period in the religious history of the Mongols in terms of Christianity. Apart from the debates between Buddhists and Taoists and the expeditions against the Ismailis and the caliph in Baghdad, Christianity had gained a presence in his court. Only one source suggests that Möngke Khan converted to Christianity and the veracity of this claim has been disproved by modern historians.[67] However, if it did not convince the Khan himself, Christianity seems to have been widespread among some of his wives. One of them was Oghul Qaimish, the daughter of the leader of the Oyrat people at the time of Chinggis Khan, who was first married to Tolui and then passed to Möngke after the death of his father.[68] Although Oghul Qaimish was dead when Friar William of Rubruck was going to the Great Khan Möngke in 1254, the priest was nevertheless taken to her dwelling because it 'had belonged to one of his wives [Oghul Qaimish], a Christian, whom he had loved deeply'.[69] It is interesting to observe the diplomacy exercised here by the Mongols. It seems an appropriate protocol (if there was one) to receive the Christian priest in the tent of a Christian wife even if she was already dead.

The daughter of Oghul Qaimish, Shirin Khatun (Cirina Qaten in the extract below), is mentioned as having been in charge of her mother's *ordo*. In the company of other religious men, Rubruck was invited to

> go to the apartment of the young mistress Cirina, which was behind the large dwelling which had belonged to her mother. When the cross entered she prostrated herself on the ground and adored it with great devotion for she had been well instructed in this respect, and she placed it in a prominent position on a silken cloth.[70]

This is plainly a reference to the performance of religious rituals among Mongol women requiring not only the instruction in religious values, but also direct interaction with religious leaders who performed these ceremonies for women. In fact, there are examples in Rubruck's accounts of him visiting some of the Khan's wives together with other religious leaders to offer not just spiritual comfort but, more importantly, to perform rituals with the aim of healing and combatting magical enchantments.[71]

It is impossible to generalise, but in this story one might be able to discern something of the female attitude towards religion in this central period of the empire. Qutay Khatun, wife of Möngke, is described as a 'pagan', which most probably means that she had not been baptised and was, in the eyes of the Christian priest, a 'shamanist'. He is, however, summoned to her *ordo* in the company of a Christian monk because the lady is sick and cannot leave her bed. The monk

> made her get up from her couch and adore the cross, kneeling down three times and placing her forehead on the ground, and he stood with the cross on the west side of the dwelling and she on the east. This done they changed places and the monk went with the cross to the east side, she to the west; then, although she was so weak she could hardly stand on her feet, he insolently ordered her to prostrate again and adore the cross three times towards the east according to the Christian custom, and she did so. He also taught her to make the sign of the cross on herself.[72]

After this visit, the lady deteriorated towards death and the shamans did not provide any solution. At this moment, Möngke sent for the monk who accompanied Rubruck and asked him to do something or he would have to respond with his life. In despair, the monk asked Rubruck and his companions to pray for the lady and prepared a potion made of a certain root mixed with holy water prepared by William himself. Afterwards, the monk, William and two Nestorian priests went to visit the woman and performed a similar ritual to that done with Shirin involving the cross and the Gospel being read over her. They made her drink the holy water and root mixture and 'at last feeling better she cheered up and ordered four *iascots* of silver to be brought' and distributed among the religious men.[73] Möngke was impressed, he took the cross in his hand and granted permission to 'carry the cross on high on a lance'.[74] It is remarkable, though, that

despite her participation in these rituals and the periodic visits by Christian priests and monks, there is no indication of this woman having converted to Christianity. Rubruck blames the Nestorian priests for not baptising her, but it seems that hers was a more syncretic understanding of religious practice, with pagan elements being mixed with those Nestorian rituals that had proved 'effective'. Rubruck also blamed the Nestorian priests for not condemning 'any form of sorcery'; it is not surprising that he particularly disliked all this syncretism when, in the room of Qutay, he saw a Christian silver chalice together with 'four swords half way out of their scabbards' around the lady's bed and a black stone hanging on the wall.[75] William of Rubruck's description indicates that Qutay was not committed to Christianity and it suggests that the *khātūn* incorporated Christian rituals into a set of ceremonies connected with her more syncretic set of beliefs.[76] Of course, one cannot generalise from this relationship to all Mongol women, nor even to the other wives of Möngke Khan.

The chief wife of Möngke at the time of his accession to the throne was Qutuqtay Khatun.[77] She gave him a son and a daughter and was a committed Christian in the court of her husband.[78] She frequently attended the Nestorian church and Buddhist temples which were in the court. Rubruck was present in the church when she

> prostrated, placing their foreheads on the ground after the Nestorian custom, and then they touched all the statues with their right hand, always kissing the hand afterwards; and then they proffered their right hand to all present in the church, for this is the custom of Nestorians on entering church.[79]

This woman was not only actively participating in religious rituals, but appeared to have a priori knowledge of the ceremonies. Inside the church, the lady removed her *boghtagh* and ordered everybody to leave while she was, presumably, baptised.[80] On another occasion, it was Möngke Khan himself who entered the church and sat next to his wife before the altar. Whether this was an act of religious compromise, a way to content the Christian community in his court, or simply an act of companionship towards his chief wife is not clear, but it seems that the queen's involvement in Christianity was such that she might have served as a broker between Christianity and the Mongols.[81] Möngke's commitment to Christianity was ambiguous, but his wife's commitment to the Christian communities was such that she would stay with them after her husband, once he had distributed money, food and wine among the monks and priests, had left, until the lady, 'now drunk, got into a cart, while the priests sang and howled, and she went her way'.[82]

The interaction between khātūns and religious leaders in Ilkhanid Iran

Some of the women who accompanied the Mongol campaign under Hülegü to conquer Iran were Christians. They adapted tents into churches where priests, monks and Mongol *khātūns* could worship. Among those women who had a church in their *ordo* was Hülegü's wife, Doquz Khatun. Rashid al-Din links the favour showed by the Ilkhan to Christianity with the role of his wife. According to the Persian historian, 'a church was always made at the gate of Doquz Khātūn's ordu, and the *naqus* was sounded'.[83] The church was also noted by Christian sources, which add that 'she very much loved all Christians, Armenians and Syrians, so that her tent was a church, and a sounder travelled with her, and many Armenian and Syrian priests'.[84] Even non-Mongol Christian women were allowed to establish places of worship and to maintain their traditions. When Maria Palaiologina (Despina Khatun), the illegitimate daughter of the Byzantine emperor Michael III Palaiologos (d. 1282) came to Iran as part of a marriage alliance between the Mongols and Byzantium, she brought a Christian orthodox bishop with her and founded a bishopric in Tabriz.[85]

Doquz Khatun's personal beliefs and Mongol political strategy in Iran seemed to go hand in hand: favouring the Christians was a way to extend control over mainly Muslim Iran. But, when the Ilkhanate's strategy changed, the personal religious attitudes of the women were no longer in line with the new political expedient. Although Qutui Khatun's son was deeply involved with Sufi shaykhs, and she herself developed a policy of proximity with Muslims when she ruled the kingdom on behalf of her son, a few years earlier she had not hesitated to support and join Christian rituals that had been stopped because of the rivalry between Islam and Christianity in Azerbaijan. In 1279, she went in person to the town of Maragha and encouraged the Christian community to restore the ritual of blessing water on the day of the Epiphany.[86] She 'commanded the Christians to go forth according to their custom with crosses suspended from the heads of their spears'.[87]

The ritual syncretism that women seemed to follow in their personal relationship with Christianity was echoed when the Mongols came into contact with the majority Muslim population in Iran. Among the Turco-Mongol dynasties that ruled the Middle East prior to the arrival of Hülegü, women in the royal families were deeply engaged in Islamic rituals. The Saljuq dynasty saw women undertaking the pilgrimage to Mecca to fulfil the religious duty of the hajj, they recognised Islamic jurisprudence in

matters of family and divorce, as well as the political and religious authority of the caliph and the ᶜ*ulamā*ᵓ.[88] At the same time, more popular forms of Islamic religious expression were emerging in Iran in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries with the mystical form of Islam (Sufism) already present among the women of the Saljuq court, as some of them appear mentioned in, for example, the hagiography of the Sufi Ahmad-i Jam (also known as Zhandah Pil).[89] Similarly, among the Saljuqs of Rum in Anatolia, the growth of Konya as a meeting point for Sufis fleeing the first Mongol invasion created a pole of attraction for Turkish women in search of spirituality. Some examples are recorded in other hagiographical material of close interactions between Turkic women and Sufi leaders.[90] One of those women was ᶜEsmati Khatun, the wife of Malek Fakhr al-Din of Erzincan, who, after feeling the presence of Shaykh Bahaᵓ al-Din Valad (father of Jalal al-Din Rumi) in the town near to where she was passing, 'straightway she mounted a thoroughbred horse and set out in pursuit of Baha'-e Valad'.[91]

The arrival of the Mongols had prompted the rapid spread of Sufism in the region. Sources suggest that the interaction between rulers and their families with Sufi leaders increased after the establishment of the Ilkhanate. The execution of the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad in 1258 and the destruction of the Ismaili strongholds in the region a few years earlier removed from the political scene of the Middle East two strong religious actors, allowing different Sufi groups to move more freely across Iran and Anatolia. This change in religious authority did not mean that the Mongols allowed any religious group to freely preach or gain adepts in the Ilkhanate. Although the Mongols granted freedom of religion, the first decades of Mongol rule in Iran were marked by a hectic religious policy in which Christianity, Islam and Buddhism were in turn favoured or persecuted. However, the presence of Sufi shaykhs has been recorded among members of the Mongol royal family in all the territories occupied by the Mongols. Although their role in the Islamisation process undergone by the Mongols has recently been softened, they certainly played a role in bringing Islam closer to the Mongol conquerors, especially in Iran and the Golden Horde.[92] Interaction between Mongols and Sufis even reached the Yuan dynasty, where we find specific mention of the involvement of Sufis in the Yuan court appearing in an anecdote involving Möngke Temür (r. 1294–1307) and his passion for wine. Möngke Temür spent a lot of time drinking with 'a *danishmand* from Bukhara with the title of Raḍī, who laid claim to a knowledge of alchemy, magic, and talismans and by sleight of hand and deceit had endeared himself to Temür Qa'an'.[93] Allegedly, such practices annoyed

Qubilai Khan, who decided to send the Radi on a trip during which he would be killed.[94]

In the period prior to Ghazan Khan's conversion to Islam, information regarding the involvement of Mongol women in Islamic religious rituals in Iran is scarce. One of the reasons for this seems to be that during the first thirty years of Mongol dominion in Iran the majority of influential women in the court – and therefore those who attracted the attention of the chroniclers – were either Christians, Buddhists or remained attached to their shamanic practices. Yet, Sufis were present in the court from at least the early 1280s when Tegüder Ahmad (r. 1282–4) allegedly spent more time in their company than ruling the Ilkhanate.[95] Nevertheless, references to men in the Mongol court engaging with Sufi leaders suggest that women may also have taken part in these practices in their *ordos*. In the case of Ghazan Khan (r. 1295–1304), his conversion seems to have occurred under the tutelage of the Kubrawiya order by Sadr al-Din Ibrahim Hammuya, the son of Sa^cd al-Din Muhammad, one of the disciples of Najm al-Din Kubra. As Charles Melville has shown, sources suggest that Ghazan received a woollen coat from Sadr al-Din Ibrahim Hammuya as a clear indication of his affiliation.[96] As Amitai has pointed out, to what extent Ghazan was aware of the Sufi meaning of this cloth remains a mystery.[97] However, his involvement with Sufism is also mentioned by Rashid al-Din: '[Ghazan Khan] rewarded all the sayyids, imams, and shaykhs, giving them purses and alms, and he issued strict orders for the building of mosques, madrasas, khanaqahs, and charitable institutions. When the month of Ramadan came, he occupied himself with acts of devotion in the company of imams and shaykhs'.[98]

The chronicles of the period reflect the increasing importance of the Sufi shaykh. For example, Banakati dedicated the end of his account of individual Mongol rulers to the enumeration of the deaths of some shaykhs who had passed away in this period. Shaykh Taj al-Din Abu al-Fazl Mahmud bin Mahmud bin Da^cud al-Banakati (maybe a relative of the author) was included among other shaykhs at the end of the description of Tegüder Ahmad's reign (1282–4).[99] In addition, Rashid al-Din makes sporadic mention of the role of Sufi dervishes in Iran as mediators in diplomatic enterprises between amirs, family members and royal women.[100] More specifically, he mentions a 'Shaykh Mahmud Dinavari, who had been named *shaykhu'l-mashāyīkh* [head of religious activity] and was one of Bōlōghan Khātūn's [wife of Arghun] protégées' in her *ordo* in Iran.[101]

Apart from this case, clearer indications of interaction between Muslim religious leaders and Mongol *khātūns* do not emerge in the sources until later. This visibility might also have come about as a result of the

popularisation of hagiographies as a literary genre in the Islamic world in the late thirteenth century, and especially in the fourteenth century. Although many were composed at the end of the Mongol period or after the disintegration of the unified Ilkhanate in 1335, these works usually look back at the Mongol dynasty of Iran in the first half of the fourteenth century to find legitimation of their respective Sufi orders. In so doing, they would include specific references to Mongol women in close contact to Sufi shaykhs who are mostly omitted from historical chronicles. For example, the *Safwat al-safa*, composed in c. 1357–8 by Ibn Isma^c^il ibn Bazzaz, narrates the miracles performed by Shaykh Safi al-Din Ardabili, who became the eponymous founder of the Safavid order based in the Iranian city of Ardabil and who was later regarded as the founder of the Safavid dynasty that ruled Iran from 1501 until 1736.[102]

Some anecdotes contained in the *Safwat al-safa* report encounters between Sufi shaykhs and Mongol *khātūns*. For example, a meeting between Safi al-Din and Sultan Abu Sa^c^id's wife Baghdad Khatun is mentioned during a visit made by the Mongol ruler to the shaykh. One particular story tries to illustrate the purity of the master by recounting his pious behaviour, such as refraining from speaking to the Mongol lady directly or denying her the *sufria* (provisions given to visitors). When asked as to the reason behind the shaykh's apparently impolite attitude towards the *khātūn*, Safi al-Din argues that it was due to the fact that the Mongol lady was not veiled.[103] Non-veiling was characteristic of Mongol women, being also noted by Ibn Battuta when he visited the Golden Horde around the time that Baghdad Khatun was visiting Safi al-Din in Azerbaijan.[104] The anecdote contained in the *Safwat al-safa* has the clear pedagogical purpose of portraying the shaykh as someone who believes that women should have a greater degree of piety than that exhibited by Mongol *khātūns*. At the same time, the story indicates that – in the beginning of the fourteenth century, at least – Mongol women were in close interaction with Sufi shaykhs. In addition, Baghdad Khatun is also acknowledged by the hagiographer as an important political figure of the time.[105] Highlighting her political position helps to position the shaykh as a highly influential figure who is visited by members of the royal family for advice and religious counsel. On another occasion, the *khātūn* sends a group of women to the shaykh to greet him in her name, to which the Sufi master responds by sending her his blessing.[106] It is not clear whether this was a diplomatic or religious visit, since only a passing reference is made to the encounter, but, whatever the case, the *Safwat al-safa* emphasises a fluid relationship between Baghdad Khatun and Shaykh Safi al-Din Ardabili.

Relationships like that between Shaykh Safi al-Din Ardabili and

Baghdad Khatun were not circumscribed to a single woman of the Ilkhanate. Continuing with the same account, other anecdotes mention still closer relationships between *khātūns* and Sufi leaders. For example, both Sati Beg (r. 1339) and Kurdujin Khatun are recorded as exchanging messages with Safi al-Din from their *ordos* and inviting him to their camps to lead the Sufi rituals of remembrance (*dhikr*).[107] For Mongol-dominated Anatolia, there is richer documentary evidence of the close relationship between women and Sufis; hagiographic works on the lives of some Anatolian Sufis contain numerous examples of this interaction.[108] Similar references to shaykhs in the Iranian provinces under the Mongols appear in the *Tadhkirah-yi Hazar Mazar* by ᶜIsa ibn Junayd Shirazi. For example, the regions of Yazd, Kerman and Shiraz under the reigns of Terken Khatun, Abesh Khatun and Kurdujin Khatun come up in numerous accounts of miracles performed by Sufis who occasionally interact with both male and female leaders. In one of these accounts, Terken Khatun goes to see a certain Shaykh Sadr al-Din Muzaffar on a summer's day. She finds him sitting on the floor wearing a very thin garment, with his turban in his hand. At her arrival, he proposes to go together to visit another shaykh and the *khātūn* is present throughout the conversation between the two men as if her company was a common event in the life of thse dervishes.[109]

Although it is hard to identify specific references to these shaykhs trying to bring the Mongols to Islam, the proximity between Sufi dervishes and members of the court might have been accompanied by proselytism. Rashid al-Din notes the existence of proselytising activities among the Turko-Mongol royal classes: 'Khwaja Saᶜduddin the Sāhib-*dīvān* immediately arrested Pir Yaᶜqub's emissary who had come into the ordu to win converts by making promises to everyone, and sent word to the court'.[110] The competitive proselytising of the shaykhs is reflected in the hagiographical material. When a daughter of Geikhatu by the name of Malika Qutlugh sent some provisions and gifts to Shaykh Zahid Ibrahim, he did not consume them nor distribute them among his disciples, arguing that they came from a military elite of Turkish origin.[111] Judith Pfeiffer has noted that this might reflect a post-Mongol ethos rather than a rejection of the *khātūn*'s presents, but also points to 'tensions between the piously minded Sufi circles, especially those around Shaykh Ṣafī of Ardabil and Shaykh Zāhid Ibrāhīm of Gilan, and the ruling Ilkhanid elite'.[112]

Overall, the image emerging of the relationship between women and religion is diverse. From the different cases found in the sources, Mongol women appear to have had an active individual approach to religious rituals and personalities from pre-imperial times up to the last years of

the Ilkhanate. Yet, our knowledge of their religious involvement varies depending on the time, place and availability of sources. In the court of Möngke Khan, there was an active participation of women in Christian practice, while in the Ilkhanate Sufi Islam seems to have been the main preference of Mongol women in the early fourteenth century. Further, participation in more or less syncretic religious rituals and their proximity with religious leaders do not tell us much about the beliefs of these women, nor to what extent they considered themselves part of the religious communities they encountered as they moved into the Middle East.

Adopting the Faith of the Other: Conversion among Women in the Mongol Empire

Research on religious conversion among pastoral societies in general and among the Mongols in particular is abundant. The generally accepted view is that, when the leading member of a group decides to adopt a particular religion, the majority of the population follow suit.[113] Typically, the choice of religion is based on 'mundane (rather) than spiritual considerations' and motivated by the prospect of political reward.[114] The nomads of the Altaic world are seen as lacking in a 'great religious tradition', preventing them from creating a universal religion that could be adopted by the conquered sedentary population.[115] But, to characterise religion in the Mongol Empire in this way fails to give a complete picture, particularly of the process of conversion. As Melville has shown, at least in the case of the conversion of Ghazan Khan, the adoption of Islam was the consequence of an ongoing process of Islamisation among the Mongols that had started at least thirty years prior to the official date of conversion.[116] Furthermore, though there seems to have been a political aspect to the conversion of Mongol rulers to different religions across Eurasia, when one focuses on women's conversion such political motivation is not always apparent.

Mongol rulers did not adopt any universal religion whilst the empire continued to be a unified entity.[117] In the early 1260s, it divided into four khanates following the civil war between two Toluid candidates to the throne. In each of the resulting territories, religious preferences took a different form. In China, Lamaist Buddhism was favoured over Taoism and led to the development of Neo-Confucianism.[118] To what extent Qubilai Khan himself adopted Buddhism is not clear and the conversion of Mongol khans in China to the Tibetan branch of Buddhism would have to wait another generation.[119] In Russia and Iran, Christianity gained some favour initially, but the ruler was never converted. Islam had some success to start with in the mid-thirteenth century, but did not consolidate its posi-

tion until the beginning of the fourteenth century.[120] Finally, Central Asia seems to have been the place where the adoption of Islam as an official religion took longer to materialise. The conversion of the Chaghataids to Islam, apart from a few initial short-lived cases, did not take place until the mid-fourteenth century.[121]

When turning our attention towards women's adoption of new religion, it should be remembered that studying female conversion among the Mongols is particularly difficult because of the nature of the sources. This is not the case with male leaders, but with women we lack specific narratives dealing with their conversion.[122] Some chroniclers of the Mongol period do, however, include women in their general accounts of the conversion of the newcomers. For example, Juvayni, when describing Chinggis Khan in the thirteenth century, mentions that

> as for his children and grandchildren, several of them have chosen a religion according to their inclination, some adopting Islam, others embracing Christianity, others selecting idolatry and others again cleaving to the ancient canon of their fathers and forefathers and inclining in no direction; but these are now a minority.[123]

Similarly, the Nestorian Rabban Sauma told the Vatican Curia in Rome that

> many of our Fathers have gone into the countries of the Mongols, and Turks, and Chinese and have taught them the Gospel, and at the present time there are many Mongols who are Christians. For many of the sons of the Mongol kings and queens have been baptized and confess Christ. And they have established churches in their military camps, and they pay honour to the Christians, and there are among them many who are believers.[124]

Presumably, these accounts were trying to portray the Mongols as allies of either Islam or Christianity depending on the predisposition of the author. However, they also reflect the fact that in the thirteenth century the Mongols were progressively adopting universal religions but the mechanisms by which they did it are less evident.

Adopting Buddhism and Christianity: female conversion in the united empire

Many Mongol men and women were already attached to Buddhism by the time of the occupation of China. Anatoly Khazanov has noted that the religious context of China was significantly different from that of the other territories occupied by the Mongols. In the Far East, the nomadic conquerors had to face the 'dichotomy of religious confrontation versus religious

adjustment' when formulating their attitude towards the 'Chinese religions'.[125] Early in the Mongol Empire, a singular story emerges in this context, originated by the exile of Güshlüg, the Naiman ruler who found refuge in Central Asia after being defeated by Chinggis Khan.[126] Güshlüg fled to the Qarakhitai Empire after the being defeated in battle in 1204 and married the Gur Khan's stepdaughter.[127] Rashid al-Din specifically mentions that 'she had converted him to Idolatry' when he arrived in Central Asia.[128] The account is also confirmed by Juvayni, who suggests that the refugee might have been a Christian, as many Naimans were. He continues by saying that his wife made him into an 'idolater like herself and to abjure Christianity'.[129] There appears to have been a clear political motive behind Güshlüg's conversion to Buddhism: it would have been a way of gaining legitimacy among the Qarakhitai elite in order to gain the throne. However, the fact that the Muslim sources underline the role of this particular woman in facilitating his conversion is open to a twofold interpretation.The influence of women is portrayed in a negative light perhaps because of the ferocity with which Güshlüg had treated the Muslim populations in Central Asia, this being linked to his conversion to Buddhism in the Persian sources.[130] However, the story also reveals a more 'domestic' environment for religious conversion within the family household, with women directly influencing the faith of their husbands.[131]

In China, after the Mongol conquest, Chabui Khatun's role in the promotion of Lamaist Buddhism is well known.[132] We do not know if she had been Buddhist from birth or if she became one before leaving Mongolia to follow her husband Qublai to China. What seems to be certain is that she was already a Buddhist when she arrived in China, as she is described as being an 'ardent' believer in the teachings of Buddha.[133] Her role in influencing her husband Qubilai Khan in promoting Lamaism in Yuan China underlines the role that these women had in promoting religion within the empire.[134] Qubilai followed the pattern of other nomadic dynasties that had conquered China when he adopted Buddhism as the main religion of the dynasty.[135] But, in his espousal of Lamaism, he drove the ruling elite into the 'Buddhist denomination that was most alien to Chinese'.[136] This certainly allowed him to establish a distinction between the rulers and the ruled population, if we frame the evidence from a political point of view. However, cases such as that of Chabui's personal involvement in Buddhism and the documented existence of Mongol Chinggisid monks in the thirteenth century support the idea that personal conviction went hand in hand with political gain among members of the Mongol elite.[137]

Both Christianity and Islam expanded in China under Mongol rule with different degrees of success. Scholars have noticed the presence of

an important number of Muslim officials in the Yuan court in the past, but to what extent these individuals managed to attract either Mongols or Chinese to their faith is difficult to assess.[138] There is nonetheless the paradigmatic case of Prince Ananda, a grandson of Chinggis Khan by his son Mamqala, who received special attention in Persian sources for being 'always in the mosque, praying, fasting, and reading the Qur'an; … he had circumcised the children of most of the Mongols; and … he had converted the greater part of the army to Islam'.[139] According to the same Persian sources, the main influence for his commitment to Islam came from a Central Asian Muslim nurse called Zulayka and her husband, who were instrumental in Ananda's following the Pillars of Islam and engaging in religious rituals in adulthood to such an extent that he incurred the opposition of his grandfather Qubilai and his cousin the Great Khan Temür Khan (r. 1294–1307).[140] Interestingly, many of Ananda's Muslim supporters were attached to the *ordo* of Temür Khan's mother Kökejin Khatun, who opposed Ananda in favour of her son in the dispute.[141] Yet, the Chinese sources are less explicit regarding not only Ananda's conversion to Islam but also the motives behind his adoption of Islam. Eastern accounts suggest the possibility of obtaining political and military support from the influential Muslim community that lived in Ananda's appanage as a more realistic motivation for the conversion rather than Rashid al-Din's more romantic version.[142]

Christians, on the other hand, seem to have exercised a more active approach to proselytising, albeit with similar limited success. John of Montecorvino, a Franciscan missionary who travelled to China at the end of the thirteenth century, arrived in the Yuan capital in 1294 just after the death of Qubilai Khan. He immediately went to see the new ruler and 'summoned the Emperor himself to receive the Catholic faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ with the letters of the Lord Pope, but he was too far gone in idolatry'.[143] As Jackson has suggested, the Catholic Church developed a strategy of conversion from above among the Mongols, which proved fruitless in China where none of the khans embraced Christianity.[144] With regard to women, those Nestorian Christian members of the Chinggisid family like Sorghaghtani Beki acquired important positions in China despite their religious affiliation. But, conversion to Christianity among women in China seems to have been rare, judging by the available material. There is a confusing account of the conversion of a woman in the Yuan court contained in a Syriac manuscript at the Vatican Library commissioned by 'Sara the believer … famous among queens, sister of George, the glorious king of the Christians'.[145] She was identified as the wife of Altan Buqa, grandson of Qubilai Khan, and the daughter of

the Öngüt king named 'George' by Montecorvino.[146] She had a 'Turkic name at birth but assumed the name Sara after baptism. She is included in the Yüan shih under the name Yeliwan'.[147] This is an isolated and poorly documented case but does suggest, as with the case of Ananda, the rather testimonial impact of both Islam and Christianity among the Mongols in China.

The conversion of the Kerait people, the Naimans and the Oyrats was done by Christian missionaries before the establishment of the Mongol Empire. Attempts to convert the nomads once they had built empires beyond their traditional heartland were fruitless for missionaries visiting the steppes in medieval times. Khazanov has suggested that this failure was 'connected with their claims [Christian] on the supremacy over temporal and ecclesiastical authorities of the converts. The nomadic rulers were afraid that the conversion to Christianity would put their independence in danger'.[148] Christian chroniclers often mentioned the conversion of Mongol rulers to their faith, but these were mostly false claims aiming to generate propaganda about Christian expansion to their audience in Europe. Güyük Khan and Möngke Khan are both mentioned as having converted to Christianity, but the veracity of these accounts looks very doubtful when weighed against information from other sources, where there is no indication that any Great Khan or ruler of a khanate ever adopted Christianity.[149] Unfortunately, we lack any reliable conversion narrative among Mongol women either converting to Christianity or abandoning Christianity. This is especially relevant in the case of Iran, where the large number of influential Christian *khātūns* who lived in the Ilkhanate in the thirteenth century had become Christians only before arriving in Iran.

In the territories of the Golden Horde, Christian travellers who visited Russia in the thirteenth century evince frustration at their unsuccessful attempts to baptise the nomads, often blaming other Christian sects, whether Nestorian or Orthodox, for ruining their proselytising.[150] Yet, it is in these territories where we find the highest-ranking Christian convert in the Mongol court. Batu's son Sartaq, who ruled the Golden Horde for a short time in 1255, 'loved the Christian religion and was baptized'.[151] But, beyond the case of this short-lived local ruler, attempts to bring the Mongols to Christianity were largely unsuccessful. Individual cases of women adopting the Christian faith are scarce and it seems that most of the women of the Golden Horde who were Christian had belonged to the religion before the Mongols came to the region, similar to those who had gone to Iran. The cases analysed in the previous section suggest that those women who were not Christian might have turned to Nestorian and

Catholic priests to perform rituals of healing, but their strict conversion to Christianity (baptism) was not the general rule. Christianity was the religion of women belonging to Mongol groups that had adopted it in Mongolia before the rise of Chinggis Khan. From the fifteenth century onwards, the interaction between the Mongols of the Golden Horde and the Christian Russian principalities generated contradictory accounts which highlight the religious tension between these two political entities. The rise of Muscovy as the chief bulwark of Christian opposition to the Muslim Mongols triggered a topos of forced conversion of the Mongols to Christianity and the Russians to Islam, a theme often repeated in the Russian sources, including fables of Russian women as agents to bring Christianity to the Muslim Tatars.[152]

Before turning our attention to the Islamisation of the Ilkhanate, it is worth mentioning that, despite the favourable treatment that Christianity had initially received from the Mongols in Iran, there are no accounts of women being converted to that religion in the Ilkhanate.[153] Certainly, Christian women were politically, socially and economically important in the area, but even when Christianity played a fundamental role in the political strategy of the Ilkhanate, conversion to Christianity was not fashionable in the Mongol *ordos.*[154] It has been argued that 'the rivalries between Christians, the intrigues and litigations between Jews, and the religious liberalism of the Mongols, who allowed the Muslims to continue professing their religion freely, made the non-Muslim communities extremely vulnerable'.[155] Thus, despite the presence of Christian priests in ladies' *ordos* in Iran, conversion to Christianity among women in the Ilkhanate did not occur, and new generations of Mongols in Iran would mostly adopt Islam as their religion despite the Nestorian affiliation of their mothers and wives and their fruitless attempts to bring their children to Christianity.[156]

Left out of the records: some considerations on Islamisation among women in the Ilkhanate

In the case of conversion to Islam in the Middle East after the Arab conquest, Richard Bulliet has suggested that the principal reason for the early conversion of individuals to Islam was the maintenance of the social status enjoyed under the previous ruler and even the possibility of rising socially under Arab patronage. According to this argument, there was no effort at systematic conversion by the government, no spiritual experience and no Muslim charisma to attract non-Muslims.[157] Islam was not defined in the first century *hijra* and the non-existence of sacramental conversion

rites such as baptism among Muslims makes it difficult to establish who changed religion and who continued practising the old one. Paying heed to the notion formulated by Michael Cook and Patricia Crone of a 'misunderstanding' of Islam in the early Islamic period,[158] Bulliet concludes that conversion to Islam would have been motivated by social considerations rather than religious belief, particularly in a society divided between 'rulers' and 'others', with the latter divided into different minorities.[159] Bulliet's theory has been criticised. For example, Richard N. Frye has argued that this notion of individual conversion cannot apply to the entire population and is only representative of the Persian upper class.[160] Furthermore, Michael G. Morony has pointed out with reference to the distinction made by Bulliet between individual and group conversion (tribes converting en masse) that one can also be made between the specific modes of conversion of men, women, children and so on. Morony adds that Bulliet's theory implies that the tribe was the only kind of social group to convert en masse.[161] More recently, Bulliet has revised his initial ground-breaking study, adding new particularities to the 'conversion curve' he drew for the adoption of Islam in Iran in the early period of the Islamisation of the Middle East.[162] It is difficult to extrapolate Bulliet's theory to the whole of the Mongol Empire, where the process of Islamisation responded to a variety of factors.[163] However, his Islamisation curve, based on the bell curve, does seem to represent, to a certain degree, the process of Islamisation of Mongol *khātūns* in Iran: a slow start in the initial decades after the arrival of Hülegü; a gained momentum in the middle portion of the curve, which would correspond to the 1280s up to the years around the conversion of Ghazan Khan in 1295; and then a more steady increase as the population of possible adopters became saturated.

There were, nonetheless, certain specific characteristics of the Mongol Empire that facilitated the proximity between Islam and the new conquerors. Different from Bulliet's case study of Persian aristocracy in the early centuries of Islam, the nomadic character of the Mongols has been seen as the key element in their conversion to Islam. This nomadic element meant that conversion to Islam did not put at risk Mongol political independence, because the loyalties of the Mongol elite were based on tribal ties that preceded their conquest of the Islamic lands. Further, with the removal of caliphal authority from the political scene in 1258, the possibility of a religious class (especially the *ᶜulamāᵓ*) influencing the policies of the Mongols was also reduced. In addition, adopting Islam did not mean becoming affiliated to an ethnic group in the way that adopting Confucianism or Taoism would have implied in China, thus allowing the Mongols to retain their identity vis-à-vis the conquered populations.[164]

The general view is that the conversion of the Mongols in Iran was not a mass conversion triggered by the conversion of a ruler, but was, on the contrary, a situation in which the leader's conversion was, in 1295, essential to his rule being legitimised.[165] It would seem, therefore, that conversion to Islam was a rather individual enterprise leading to a majority Muslim population eventually 'convincing' the ruling elite to adopt Islam through a variety of channels.[166] Among these channels or vectors was the influence of the Sufi leaders and institutions that mushroomed in Iran under Mongol rule. Whilst their importance to the conversion process is still being debated among scholars, it does not seem implausible to suggest that they played a role in bringing the Mongols to Islam.[167]

However, in this context, references to women converting to Islam are almost non-existent. One exception is the case of Chichek Khatun, a wife of Berke Khan (r. 1257–66) in the Golden Horde, who apparently converted to Islam at the same time as her husband in the mid-thirteenth century.[168] However, her conversion is not described in detail and is only mentioned in a limited number of sources. She is portrayed as a committed Muslim, who had a portable mosque in her *ordo*, similar to Doquz's portable church mentioned above.[169] Among the first generation of Mongol women that migrated from Mongolia to Iran, Central Asia and the Golden Horde, no other examples of this kind exist. One has to wait a generation to see another female conversion to Islam that the chroniclers considered worthy of mention. Once again, in the Golden Horde territories, the conversion of Qiyaq Khatun to Islam is mentioned by Rashid al-Din, but is not without problems.[170] According to Rashid al-Din, Qiyaq Khatun was given in marriage to a son of the powerful amir Saljidai Güragan of the Qonqirat people, who was called Yailaq in the Golden Horde and was most probably a Buddhist. After the marriage,

> Qiyaq Khātūn became a Muslim. Yailaq, being a Uighur, could not accommodate himself to this and there were constant disputes and quarrels because of their religion and beliefs. They treated Qiyaq with contempt, and she told her father, mother, and brothers.[171]

The mistreatment of the *khātūn* might be connected, on the one hand, to the political background of intrigues and power disputes within the Golden Horde.[172] On the other, it shows that the faith of the Mongols was shifting, not only among rulers, but within other strata of society as well. We can only speculate here because of a lack of evidence, but it does not seem plausible that this *khātūn* converted only for 'political reasons' in view of the political problems and instability that it caused her relatives. Her conversion might, therefore, have been based on a sincere personal

attachment to Islam, an attachment that would put at risk her marital relationship with another powerful family.

Notwithstanding these few individual accounts of female conversion to Islam occurring in the Russian Steppe and the maintenance of their Christian affiliation by women in the early period of Mongol rule in Iran, women who were born and raised in the Ilkhanate became Muslims at the turn of the fourteenth century. In the later decades of the Ilkhanate, the religious affiliations of the Mongol rulers' wives are generally not mentioned. It seems that many of them were already Muslims, such as Baghdad Khatun, Kurdujin Khatun and Sati Beg, whereas others such as Qutlugh Malek were involved in patronising shaykhs even though neither of her parents was Muslim.[173] The question that remains is how did a majority of women affiliated to either Christian, Buddhist or shamanist beliefs in thirteenth-century Iran become a majority Muslim group by the fourteenth century?

The lack of female conversion narratives suggests that women progressively adopted Islam in a similar way to their male counterparts, that is to say through a variety of channels of conversion that progressively brought Islam closer to women in the court. Following the conversion curve mentioned above, the key period seems to have been the decades of the 1280s and 1290s in Ilkhanid Iran, when a new generation of Mongol elite was being raised in Iran and the Muslim territories controlled by Hülegü's successors. Among the limited cases we have in the sources for this period, we can highlight that of the Jalayir Mongol Aisha, wife of the later Ilkhan Geikhatu (r. 1291–5). Her name denotes a clear attachment to Islam, though her father was a Mongol *noyan* in Geikhatu's army who does not seem to have converted to Islam. She had no Muslim relatives except her two brothers, who were called Hasan and Husein, and grew up in Muslim Anatolia, where she spent some time while her husband was governor of the region in the 1280s.[174] It is perhaps risky to interpret conversion to Islam simply by a change in name, yet the lack of any further information on the life of this woman makes it impossible to go further into her beliefs, commitment to the faith or the moment of her conversion.

The presence of Muslim shaykhs in the *ordos* and the increasing interaction between Mongol rulers and Persian amirs might also have contributed to the spread of Islam among the Mongol nobility in general, and among women in particular.[175] As we have seen in the previous section, women closely interacted with religious leaders including Sufi shaykhs. However, this proximity did not necessarily mean conversion in the majority of cases. Apart from some notable examples such as the allusion by Shams al-Din Ahmad Aflaki to the active role of Jalal al-Din

Rumi in bringing about the conversion of Princess Tamar of Rum to Islam, hagiographies say little about the actual moment of conversion of noble women to Islam in the Mongol territories.[176] Generally, the Sufi shaykh is portrayed in the hagiographic anecdotes as being in the company of the *khātūn*, performing ritual acts with them or giving them blessings, but these women were generally already Muslims by the time they interacted with them.[177] This is even more surprising if we take into consideration the sense of propaganda that this literature has, and it is puzzling that acts of conversion among women were not included more often. We can assume that the author of a hagiography would not have missed the chance to attribute to a given shaykh the credit for the conversion of a *khātūn*. Yet, we lack any specific reference to the conversion of a woman by a Sufi shaykh beyond the example mentioned in Aflaki's work.

So, in the absence of specific references to women's conversion, we can not, at this point, go further than extract some partial conclusions. On the one hand, we could side with DeWeese and Amitai here in claiming that perhaps Sufi shaykhs were not such an important agent of conversion, but rather personalities that became close to these ladies after they had converted or were raised as Muslims.[178] On the other hand, most of these hagiographies were written decades after the events they narrate and during the fourteenth century. Perhaps by the time these authors were writing the conversion of the Mongols (both men and women) was no longer an issue. In fact, the stories in some of these hagiographies reflect a deeper concern of the shaykhs in instructing these new Muslim-Mongol women into proper Islamic practices such as wearing the veil or eating pure (halal) food, rather than their being responsible for their conversion.[179] Either way, the presence of Sufi shaykhs among Mongol-Muslim women does not offer a clear answer to the question of their conversion. As in the case of Mongol men, there seems to have been a close relationship between them both, but to what extent these Sufis were agents of conversion for these women is difficult to say with the available evidence.

Overall, it is not possible to provide a conclusive answer to the question of how Mongol women converted to Islam. There are some cases of direct conversion in the Golden Horde or of women who allegedly converted to Islam by the direct action of a Sufi shaykh in Anatolia. However, these are isolated cases that can hardly be verified by multiple sources. In general terms, it seems that the religious transformation of the group of noble women from being a Christian majority in the thirteenth century to a mostly Muslim majority in the fourteenth century happened through different channels and that it was not a monocausal phenomenon. The continuing incorporation of Turco-Muslim women from subject dynasties

and the presence of Sufi shaykhs in the *ordos*, and a majoritarian Muslim context in which a new generation of women had grown up, might have caused a change in the religious affiliation of Mongol women from one generation to another.[180] Further research is needed on this particular aspect of Mongol women's relationship with religion, but the transition period of the final decades of the thirteenth century, albeit poorly documented, does suggest that women followed a similar chronological path to that of their male counterparts.

Religious Patronage and Cultural Activities of Mongol Women in Ilkhanid Iran

In the pre-Mongol Middle East, patronage of Islamic buildings and leaders was carried out by court members and served to legitimise the Saljuq dynasty that had recently converted to Islam.[181] As Michael Chamberlain has noted in his study of Ayyubid Damascus, this patronage was also present among women, where 'between 1159–60 and 1223–4, according to Nuᶜaymī, five of the major foundations were established by women from the military households'.[182] As with their Ayyubid counterparts, some Saljuq women actively participated in the financial support of Muslim institutions and individuals. For example, the unnamed wife of Toghril and mother of Sultan Arslan is mentioned as having great influence in the government and as being very generous in her donations to the *ᶜulamāᵓ*.[183] Similarly, Arslan Khatun (not related to Arslan Sultan) is mentioned as performing important charitable acts and financing religious buildings for the Muslim community in Yazd.[184] Another Saljuq woman, Zahideh Khatun, is mentioned in a local chronicle as financing the building of a madrasa in Shiraz:

> at the time there was not a bigger and more laborious/elaborate monument in the entire Fars.[185] And in the place at the top of the palace of the king, she ordered [to replace] the tall minaret. And she assigned many pious bequests for that purpose.[186]

More references can be found to female patronage during the Saljuq period in Anatolia. However, it is worth mentioning that the extensive references to women as patrons of Islamic institutions and personalities in this region have puzzled some scholars. In her study of the *waqfīyas* (pious foundations), Ethel S. Wolper observes that

> women are rarely mentioned as custodians of property or managers of pious foundations. Given the lack of references in *waqfīyas*, the large number of

> times that women's names appear in building inscriptions required a more elaborate explanation than that they were patrons.[187]

It is beyond the scope of this book to elucidate the role of women in Saljuq Anatolia, but it should be stressed that many of them seem to have been involved in religious patronage according to the epigraphic evidence.[188]

Religious patronage has generally been interpreted as a political tool that the Mongols used to control the conquered populations. It is considered part of 'the general Mongol attitude towards different world religions in the conquered countries [which] was characterised by political and spiritual pragmatism'.[189] However, an important distinction has been made by Atwood:

> The policy of allowing various religions to practise freely should be distinguished from the policy of granting state recognition and exemptions to favoured clergy. The practice of Judaism, for example, was never prohibited, yet Jewish clergy were rarely exempted from the payment of taxes or granted state patronage.[190]

The Mongols seem to have adapted to and incorporated patronage as an aspect of their rule.

In fact, with regard to the role of women as patrons of religion, Mongol *khātūns* can be seen as another phase in a tradition that not only preceded them to Iran but that continued after the establishment of the Mongol dynasty there in 1335. Indeed, among the local dynasties such as the Jalayirids, Muzaffarids, Sarbadars and Kartids that emerged from the collapse of the Ilkhanate, the patronage of religious buildings and Islamic art continued as an important way of legitimising the rulers.[191] Similar practices have been highlighted for the Muzaffarid, Timurid and Safavid periods in Iran, and especially among women in the Ottoman Empire.[192] However, the particularities of the Mongol Empire allow us to note some differences between it and the other dynasties. First, the fact that the Mongols were not Muslims at the time they arrived in Iran triggered greater diversity in religious patronage, with Christianity and Buddhism being seen as potential allies ahead of the Muslim majority kingdoms. Second, in the process of the Islamisation that occurred among the Mongols, the dichotomy between the centre of Mongol rule in north-western Iran and the subordinate Muslim dynasties of the south meant that patronage of Islam developed first in the periphery and progressively moved to the centre as the Mongols Islamised, and Muslim women from these dynasties were incorporated into the royal family.

But if religious patronage existed among women in the Islamic world before the arrival of the Mongols, the new nomadic conquerors also had

a tradition of religious patronage by the time they settled in Iran and the Middle East. Any exploration of how religious patronage functioned in pre-imperial Mongolia is limited by the fact that *The Secret History of the Mongols*, our only contemporary source for the period, does not provide much information about it. The only material concerning it is provided via accounts of the relationship between Chinggis Khan and Teb-Tengri. The picture that emerges is one where a political leader had given personal support to an individual who occupied the position of a religious leader. At this point in the history of the empire, it seems more appropriate to speak of personal favour being bestowed rather than an established policy of patronage of religions in general and of shamanism in particular. In fact, religious patronage as a characteristic of the Mongol Empire emerged only once the Chinggisids had begun to control and administer territories where religions other than shamanism were predominant. The two main religions (or teachings) that the new Mongol ruler had to deal with were Buddhism and Taoism, which were competing for supremacy in Northern China and Central Asia. In the early days of the empire, patronage of religions was characterised by the Mongol khan granting tax exemptions and allocating money for the construction of religious buildings. Such measures characterised Chinggis Khan's dealings with Buddhism and, especially, Taoism. Some of the policies adopted by the Mongols are recorded in a work drafted by the famous Yelü Chucai (d. 1243) against the favouritism showed by the Mongol ruler towards the Quanzhen sect of Taoism.[193] In this important Chinese contemporary account, it is mentioned that a 'Buddhist monk or any other man who cultivates goodness, they are exempted from taxes and corvée'.[194] Critical of the impression made by Changchun on Chinggis Khan, Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai denounces the Taoist master for asking the emperor to exempt only members of his sect from levies without mentioning the Buddhist monks.[195] In this way, this source portrays the competition between Buddhism and Taoism for the Khan's favour, a situation that would persist until Qubilai Khan and his wife Chabui set their preferences for Lamaist Buddhism in the second half of the thirteenth century, giving it great sums of money for temples and monks.[196]

Tax exemption was granted not only to religious leaders, but also to certain of the Khan's subjects as a sign of his magnanimity towards them. An account of Chinggis Khan commanding that a certain old man should be exempted from taxes because he was providing water to travellers by using a windlass is one example.[197] However, as Juvayni clearly mentions, religious leaders especially benefited from this fiscal treatment. In explaining the taxation system implemented by the Mongols, he says that pay-

ments were made according to the circumstances of the individual, except for those who were specifically exempted by Chinggis Khan, such as

> the Moslems the great sayyids and the excellent imams, of the Christians, whom they call erke'un the monks and scholars (*aḥbār*) and of the idolaters the priests whom they call *toyin*, the famous *toyins*; and of all these classes of people, those who are advanced in years and no longer capable of earning a living.[198]

Christian sources too record the financial support given by Chinggis Khan to Christian communities in Central Asia and his granting of freedom of worship to all members of the community.[199]

The Mongols also invested in the development of religious buildings. This helped to win the hearts of their subjects, but it also had another significant consequence. Religious buildings were an indelible part of the landscape, testifying to the magnanimous character of the ruler, gaining him prestige in the eyes of his new subjects and helping to legitimise his rule. Thus it was shown to the sedentary population that the nomad conquerors were present in the cities even if they were camping far outside them or campaigning in distant lands. Successive Mongol khans commissioned and paid for the construction of religious buildings in Northern China and in their own capital of Qaraqorum, where religious buildings belonging to different cults of the empire mushroomed.[200]

While tax exemption seems to have been a policy of male rulers towards religion, women in the early Mongol Empire became involved in religious patronage simultaneously with their accession to the throne in the 1240s. The most famous female religious patron in the formative period of the empire was Sorghaghtani Beki, who gave 1,000 silver *balish* to build a madrasa in Bukhara under the administration of Shaykh al-Islam Saif al-Din of Bakharz.[201] This endowment is also mentioned in later sources such as the *Tarikh-i Banakati*, which states that the money was given to the shaykh in order to build a *khāniqāh*, and adds that she also gave money to poets in a difficult situation and expended money on charity (*ṣadaqah*), presents and land for Muslim shaykhs. These later sources continue to emphasise the fact that she gave this financial help despite being a believer 'of the sect of Jesus'.[202] The open Christian confession of the *khātūn* and her patronage of Islamic institutions impressed the Muslim chroniclers of the time. It is difficult to assess whether this was simple charity or part of a conscious political strategy. Whatever the case, these acts certainly brought her prestige, eventually gaining her support when she put her son Möngke forward for the throne in 1250. Her reputation transcended the confines of the Islamic accounts and the Mongol frontiers and was praised

by Middle Eastern Christian chroniclers like Bar Hebraeus, and remembered by the anonymous Christian author of the *Tatar Relation*.[203]

One significant act of religious patronage occurred during the regency of Töregene Khatun (r. 1241–6). Her support for religion seems to have been in accordance with the policy initiated by Chinggis Khan and continued by Ögetei, namely supporting Taoism. At the same time, it should be remembered that female patronage of this religion existed before the arrival of the Mongols. Arthur Waley, in his introduction to *The Travels of the Alchemist,* says: 'In 1207, the Kin princess Yüan Fei presented the T'ai-hsü Kuan, the temple where Ch'ang-ch'un was living, with a complete copy of the Taoist Canon'.[204] So, in accordance with the official policy of the Mongols, on the one hand, and in keeping with a tradition of royal women patronising eastern religions on the other, Töregene authorised the printing of the Taoist canon.[205] However, as we have seen above, women's relationships with religion did not automatically correspond with what was politically convenient. The personal beliefs of these women influenced the religious milieu of the Mongols and were strongly reflected in female religious observance. On this point, de Rachewiltz has suggested that the favouritism shown towards Taoism and the patronage of the canon were also due to the particular circumstances of Töregene Khatun.[206] The personal involvement of the empress in patronising Taoism can be seen even earlier than the promulgation of the edict. Before taking control of the empire, during the last days of her husband, Töregene had been in close contact with members of the Quanzhen sect. In 1234, while her husband was sending military expeditions to Russia and consolidating Mongol control over Northern China, she donated 'a complete set of Taoist scriptures' to the leading master of the sect, who had replaced the famous old master Changchun.[207] In doing so, Töregene was not only following the tradition of the previous Jin queen Yüan Fei and acting in keeping with the religious policy of the Mongols, but she was also consolidating the position of women as patrons of religion in the Mongol Empire.

The Mongols rapidly understood the political advantage that patronage of religion had to offer. They granted tax exemptions to religious leaders and institutions in the territories they conquered and built places of worship which lent legitimacy to their rule and acted as physical reminders for the sedentary population of the presence of a nomadic empire in their territories. Geographical circumstances meant that the new empire favoured Taoism, especially the Quanzhen sect of Taoism that was strong in Northern China from the end of the twelfth century. Women also participated in the process once they had assumed real power in the empire by issuing edicts to support the Taoist canon in China and by paying

for the establishment of a madrasa in Central Asia. Similarly, when the Mongols came to Iran, women adapted to the religious circumstances they encountered.

Reflecting the general attitude of the Mongols towards religion, patronage in Iran was characterised by the gaining of political advantage by supporting one religion over another. During the early period of Ilkhanid Iran, the Mongols favoured Buddhism and Christianity in addition to Islam. Favouritism towards Christianity in the Mongol court was not new in the empire. As we have seen, during the reign of Güyük Khan (r. 1246–8), Christian officials were promoted in the court, which generated tension between Muslims and Christians in the central *ordo*.[208] Möngke Khan, being the son and husband of Christian women, had a more ambiguous approach. He seems to have favoured Christianity without personally converting, whilst preventing a confrontation with Islam. Möngke occasionally attended mass in the company of his wife, but this did not prevent him from financing Muslim festivals and being highlighted in the Persian chronicles for 'his generosity towards the Moslems', which was 'great and boundless'.[209] Some of his wives exercised a certain influence in his court. Aside from her regular participation in Christian rituals, one of Möngke's wives (Qutuqtay Khatun) also felt the need to financially support members of Christian communities, who were constantly around her. William of Rubruck recalled her habit of distributing gifts among Nestorian monks and Christian priests.[210] She made further gifts when William and his companions were about to depart, consisting mostly of silk tunics and furs.[211]

Once the Mongols had arrived in Iran, patronage no longer consisted of personal gifts, but became more elaborate in accordance with the tradition of previous dynasties. Scholars have underlined the fact that, during the reign of Hülegü Ilkhan, Christianity flourished in Iran as it had not done since the Arab invasion more than 600 years earlier.[212] Hülegü is praised in the Christian sources as being 'pro-Christian' and who allied with the kingdoms of Armenia, Georgia and the Syrians in his campaigns to the west. He granted freedom of worship to Christians in Iran and gave to Christian princes a 'vast amount of gold, silver, horses, and herds without measure or number'.[213] The part played by Doquz Khatun in this has already been mentioned. Her benefaction towards Christians is widely stressed in the sources, although the veracity of one such reference is disputed because of the nature of the source. In Frère Hayton's *Fleur des étoiles d'Orient*, the ruling couple is said, at the capture of Baghdad, to have changed the whole city by favouring the Christians. According to this account,

> Hulegu divided the districts among his generals and administrators as he saw fit. He decreed that kindness be shown to Christians everywhere and that the maintenance of fortresses and cities be entrusted to them, while the Saracens were thrown into the meanest servitude. The wife of Hulegu, named Dukos saron [Doquz Khatun], was a Christian descended from the line of those kings who had come from the East, guided by the Star, to be present at the birth of the Lord. This woman, an extremely devout Christian, [caused all the Christian churches there to be rebuilt] and all the Saracen mosques demolished.[214]

There is obvious exaggeration in this account, with its references to the slavery of Muslims, the destruction of mosques and the link between the queen and the biblical kings of the East, all serving as propaganda aimed at the Western kingdoms. Interestingly, though, the rebuilding of churches and the role of the *khātūn* are linked, testifying to the female patronage of religious buildings. Doquz's promotion of church construction is also noted in Muslim sources when they specify that it was 'for her sake [that] Hülegü Khan also favoured them [the Christians] and held them in honour, so much so that they built churches throughout the realm'.[215] The promotion of religious buildings by Doquz Khatun in Baghdad is also confirmed by another, less-contested, source. Rabban Sauma refers to the takeover by the Muslims at the time of Amir Nawruz of the 'Church which the Catholicus Makikha (1257–63) built in Baghdad by the command of Hulahu [Hülegü], the victorious king, and Tukos Khātūn [Doquz Khatun], the believing queen',[216] so verifying that, at the time of the sacking of Baghdad, the churches were championed by the wife of Hülegü.

Doquz Khatun was not the only Ilkhanid woman to favour Christianity. At least some of Hülegü's female offspring also participated in this endeavour. One daughter named Todögach Khatun, who married Tanggiz Güragän and was to become the grandmother of Sultan Abu Saᶜid (d. 1335) through his mother Haji Khatun, is recorded as having a close relationship with the leader of the Nestorian Church in Iran. 'She paid him great honour and also sent men with him to the Camp. When he arrived he went straightway to visit the great Amir Djopan [Chopan].'[217] This favouring of Christianity by Hülegü's daughters lasted into the fourteenth century and the reign of the last Ilkhan.[218] The pattern of religious patronage found in the early period of the Mongol Empire was repeated in Iran. While it was Hülegü who granted the exemptions and freedom of worship, women were directly involved in the construction of churches and the protection of religious leaders.

The reign of Abaqa (r. 1265–82) was also marked by a policy of rapprochement with Christianity spurred on by the enmity of the Mamluk

dynasty of Egypt and the recent conversion of Berke Khan to Islam in the Golden Horde.[219] There was still a good number of Mongol women who were Christians, but, in addition to this, the political context fostered the establishment of marriage alliances with Christian kingdoms. The arrival of Despina Khatun at the Mongol court as a wife of the Mongol ruler of Iran was an opportunity for other branches of Christianity to benefit from female patronage. According to some sources, she founded a church in her *ordo* and so provided a place of worship for the Jacobite Christians who lived in the court of Abaqa Ilkhan.[220] This Byzantine princess returned eventually to Constantinople in the late thirteenth century, where she continued her patronage activity by rebuilding the still-standing Church of St Mary of the Mongols in Constantinople.[221]

This intricate relationship with Christianity continued in the reign of Tegüder Ahmad (r. 1282–4). Despite his affiliation to Islam and his recurrent visits to Sufi shaykhs, Christianity was not abandoned. His mother Qutui appears to have ruled from behind the scenes and she seems to have perpetuated somewhat the characteristic Mongol religious patronage. She was a Christian herself and, when a dispute broke out between the court and the Nestorian Catholicos, she interceded with her son to save the religious leader from execution, who gave thanks to the queen and other Christian members of the court for 'mercy in the sight of the king'.[222] However, we were not able to find any specific reference to the building of churches by Qutui, which might be because it was just for a short period that she was in charge of the administration of the kingdom. However, if we consider her position in the court and her protection of Christians, it may be plausible to suggest that she might have had something to do with the policies that Tegüder adopted towards Christians. He 'wrote for them [Christians] Patents which freed all the churches, and the religious houses, and the priests (elders), and monks from taxation and imposts in every country and region'.[223] Nevertheless, while she may have influenced the adoption of these fiscal policies, the exemption from taxes is presented in the sources, as in the cases mentioned above, as a measure taken by the male ruler of the realm.

During the reign of Arghun (r. 1284–91), Christianity once more gained momentum after the brief approach to Islam made by his predecessor. Like his father, Arghun tried to bring together Christian supporters both in the Middle East and in Western Europe.[224] In light of this attitude, it is not surprising that the Christian sources regard him as a supporter of Christianity, focusing on the role of his Christian wife Örug Khatun.[225] But, despite the influence of his wife and his political proximity to Christianity, Arghun remained a committed Buddhist[226] and this faith shaped Örug's patronage

policies. It is well known that Buddhism flourished in Iran in this period, when the Mongols financially supported important Buddhist buildings.[227] It is interesting that Buddhist patronage in Iran was almost contemporary with the support of Empress Chabui in China for the construction of Tibetan temples.[228] In addition, Arghun's Buddhist environment could be also observed in the Buddhist monks present in the entourage of his son Ghazan and in his support for Buddhist personalities as attested in the Persian sources, and the presence of Buddhist temples in Iran is confirmed by claims concerning their destruction after 1295.[229] All this calls for a deep re-examination of the influence of Buddhism in Mongol Iran, where women appear not to have been that present, judging by the available sources, but whose involvement in the patronage of Buddhism might become apparent from the appearance of new evidence in the future.

After the peak in support for Buddhism under Arghun, Geikhatu's (r. 1291–5) accession to the throne heralded the beginning of a slow but steady decline in Mongol affection for both Christianity and Buddhism. The new Ilkhan had been governor of Anatolia before taking office, which might have influenced his views on religion. As we have seen, patronage of Islam and especially of Sufism in Anatolia was a widespread practice among the local rulers, and the incorporation of Muslim women such as Padshah Khatun in the king's court might have played a part in diminishing the status of Christianity among the Mongols. However, this did not mean the end of Christianity as a favoured religion in the Ilkhanid court. At the time of Geikhatu, the Mongol court moved mostly in the regions of what is now north-western Iran and Azerbaijan. So, it is not surprising that Geikhatu 'promulgated an order for him [the Catholicos] to build a church in the city of Maragha, and to place therein the vessels and the vestments for the service of the church, which the dead King Arghon [Arghun] had set up in the Camp'.[230] Geikhatu's religious policies during his short reign are confusing, but one of his wives was a particularly committed political and religious person. The Qutlughkhanid Padshah Khatun has already been mentioned as a Muslim woman who acquired an important position in the court and fought for the control of her motherland in Kerman after her husband ascended the throne. Her patronage of Islam, which is examined below, does not seem to have prevented her from having a high representative of the Nestorian Church in her province, as was observed by Marco Polo during his travels.[231]

The short reign of Baidu (r. 1295) did not provide much chance to develop a patronage strategy, but he did try to bring the Christians to his side in his struggles against Ghazan Khan.[232] In a reference to Baidu, Rashid al-Din illustrates the importance of religion as a political tool in the

Mongol Empire: 'Inasmuch as Baidu patronised Christians like bishops, priests, and monks, Shaykh Mahmud was in total support of Prince Ghazan on account of his having converted to Islam'.[233] The latter's victory and conversion to Islam marked a turning point in Mongol policy. From now on, most financial patronage would be directed towards different sects and interpretations of Islam:

> An edict was given that all the bakhshis' temples and houses of worship, as well as Christian churches and Jewish synagogues, were to be destroyed in Tabriz, Baghdad, and other Islamic places, and for that victory most of the people of Islam rendered thanks since God had not seen fit to grant this wish to past generations.[234]

The accuracy of this statement is disputed, but it does at least reflect the intentions of the Persian elites of the new Ilkhanate who appeared after Ghazan's conversion. His successor went further and, at least temporarily, decided to abolish the tax exemption for the followers of all religions apart from Islam.[235]

However, if the official policy had changed, this nevertheless did not mean that individual women were prohibited from patronising Christianity. As late as 1310–11, some of the Mongol lords and *khātūns* who still professed the Christian faith continued to support the Nestorian Church. Rabban Sauma mentions that Amir Irinjin passed at this time through Tabriz together with his wife Konchak[236] and one of his daughters.[237] They all went to see the Nestorian representatives in the city:

> the amount of money which the Amir Irnadjin [Irinjin] and his wife gave to the Catholicus was ten thousand [dinars], which are [equal to] sixty thousand *zuze* and two riding horses. And the Amir also gave a village to the church Mar Shalita, the holy martyr, for his dead father was laid therein, and his mother and his wives were buried therein.[238]

This anecdote firstly shows that individual female patronage of Christianity continued after the official conversion of the Mongols, probably because of personal attachment to this religion. At the same time, the rarity of cases like this one indicates that patronage of Christianity and Buddhism was fading away in Iran in the early fourteenth century. The internal struggles between the different Mongol *noyans* might also have been a factor in the diminishing number of patrons for Christianity, as a more homogeneous Mongol and Persian elite gradually came into being with a preference for Islam.[239]

The fact that during the first period of Mongol dominion in Iran Buddhism and especially Christianity attracted most female religious

patronage does not mean that Islam, the majority religion in the region, was neglected.[240] With the expansion of the Mongols in the early 1250s, Central Asian Muslims also enjoyed the benefit of Mongol female patronage. Information is scarce, but, during the regency of Orghina Khatun (r. 1251–60) in the Chaghataid Khanate, some references to her support for Islam are recorded.[241] Although no specific reference to her personal beliefs can be found in the sources, some authors hold that she was a Muslim.[242] She is alluded to as a benefactor who wished well towards the Muslims, but there is no specific mention of her supporting religious building or granting money to Muslim religious leaders.[243] Yet, if references to Mongol patronage in Central Asia are slim, some scattered examples of female patronage of Islam can be found in the early period of the Ilkhanate.

As we have seen, one of Hülegü's daughters is credited with supporting the Islamic community. In addition, although Arghun had been a Buddhist, Mustawfi mentions that his daughter 'Öljei Khatun'[244] decided to found a *khāniqāh*, or Dervish convent, in the place where the grave of her father stood.[245] Some authors have interpreted this act as a 'violation of the *qoruq* by a Muslim convert, Arghun's daughter, involving not only the indignity of the "secret" place's exposure, but the specific intrusion into that inviolate site of the bearers of Islamic-style sanctity'.[246] However, such 'violation' of Mongol tradition may also be thought to have occurred in the patronage of Sufi buildings by this *khātūn* and in the Islamisation process that was occurring in the Mongol court. The daughter of a Buddhist king did not just build a place of worship for a religion other than that followed by her father, but she did it on the mountain where her father's body rested, which, according to Mongol tradition, would have been a holy place because of the grave. This represents, in my view, a good example of the amalgamation of Mongol tradition with local religiosities of Iran. As previously mentioned, the relationship between Mongol *khātūns* and Sufism, and its closeness to the *ordo*, might certainly have led to such patronage. Yet examples of this link during the early period of Mongol rule in Iran are limited. The case of Bulughan Khatun 'Bozorg', the wife of Abaqa and Arghun, is well known. Melville has noted that she was associated with shaykhs and was a protector of Muslims despite the favouring of Christians and Buddhists by her husbands.[247]

Apart from these examples, the majority of Islamic foundations in this early period were created by women who, although connected to the Mongol royal family by marriage, belonged to the regions of southern Iran and Anatolia. This is interesting since it might shed some light on the acculturation of the Mongols, underlining the prominent role that Turkic

women from the periphery of the realm had had in the Islamisation of the Mongol court.[248] In the province of Kerman, the long reign of Terken Qutlugh Khatun (r. 1257–83) saw the development of Islamic patronage in the form of buildings become common in the region. Although it is not clearly specified in the local chronicles if this Turkic woman was a Muslim from an early age, she certainly grew up as a slave in a Muslim environment.[249] Once she made it to the top of the political ladder of the region of Kerman, she hurried to reform the Jami^{c} Mosque in the city, personally financing the installation of a new door.[250] This financial support given to Muslim institutions contributed to the view that 'la vielle dame [Terken Qutlugh] est un modèle de vertus islamiques, protectrice des sheikhs et autres religieux, multiplicant les dotations en main-morte et les oeuvres piés'.[251] In addition to her donation for the restoration of the door of Kerman's main mosque, she contributed to the contruction of some other buildings in her city. For example, we know that after she died in Tabriz, her daughter Bibi Terken took her mother's body back to Kerman, where she buried her in a madrasa which had been commissioned by Terken Khatun and which carried her name at the time.[252]

It is worth mentioning that, although the sources see Terken as a model of Islamic womanhood, she had not hesitated in marrying her Muslim daughter Padshah Khatun (d. 1295) to the 'pagan' Abaqa Khan in 'the Mongol fashion'.[253] The marriage solidified a strategic alliance between her line and the Mongol rulers of Iran in mind, while serving as a reflection of her more flexible observance of Islamic practices. It shows the personal nature of religious belief, which was more than just a matter of individual pragmatism or sectarian loyalty. Terken's political pragmatism and faith did not prevent her daughters from continuing her legacy of religious patronage. Padshah Khatun might have contributed to the Islamic milieu while she was in Anatolia, and it has been suggested that she helped finance the construction of a domed mausoleum at the 'Çifte Minaret' Madrasa of Erzurum.[254] When she returned to Kerman, she continued her patronage activity and 'established law, justice and fairness [to the point] that the Sultans of the world seemed insignificant and she gave many pensions and allowances to scholars and she ordered [the construction] of extraordinary madrasas and mosques'.[255] Padshah Khatun performed acts of religious patronage both in Anatolia and Kerman. Perhaps she gained confidence from her years among the Saljuqs of Anatolia, where female patronage was an established practice and where she may have been shown the political potential of financing Islam when she returned to Kerman.[256]

In fact, the Qutlughkhanids of Kerman were not the only Mongol

subject dynasty to contribute to Islamic patronage. Even before the establishment of the Mongol Empire in the second half of the twelfth century, the province of Fars under the Saljuq dynasty had seen a woman called Zahideh Khatun gather all the money she had inherited from her ancestors after the death of her husband and dedicate these resources to the acquisition of a *vaqf* (pious foundation) for a madrasa she had built in Shiraz.[257] During the Ilkhanid period, the province of Fars had three women who acted as regents for the region and at least two of them followed the tradition of participating in the foundation of religious buildings. The first was Turkan Khatun, wife of Sa^cd II Atabeg of Fars and then of Saljuq-Shah.[258] As mentioned previously, she reigned for a short time and was one night brutally killed by her second husband when he was drunk. But, before this tragic episode, she had allocated resources for the construction of a mosque in the capital of her province (Shiraz) within the complex of the Atabeg's palace.[259] Her fame was celebrated in the historical chronicles of the period and also by the famous Persian poet Sa^cdi, who considered that while the Salghurid dynasty ruled the region no harm would be done to religion.[260] We also hear about the mosque from Rashid al-Din, who mentions that, after the death of her daughter Abesh Khatun, 'her body was taken to Shiraz and buried in the *Madrase-ye ^cAḍudiya,* which her mother had built in honour of ^cAḍud al-Dīn Muḥammad'.[261]

Finally, the case of Kurdujin Khatun is interesting since she belonged to the 'new generation' of Mongols which had grown up in Iran, but she also had family connections to the Mongol royal family by her father, the Salghurids of Fars through her mother and to the Qarakhitaids of Kerman by her marriage to Soyurghatmish.[262] She was constantly involved in the struggle between these dynasties and the process of centralisation that began in the Ilkhanate after Ghazan's conversion to Islam. However, under Abu Sa^cid (r. 1317–35) she was granted the administration of the revenues of Fars's capital city and with those resources she undertook the construction of 'many public buildings in Shiraz, including mosques, madrasas and a hospital'.[263] The Islamic school is specifically referred to as 'the madrasa of Kurdujin' in one of the local histories of Shiraz, which notes that it was also a burial place for local princes and princesses in the city.[264]

If the legacy of women's patronage of religious buildings can be traced back to the original sources and the architecture of certain parts of Iran and Anatolia, less can be said about their intellectual attainments. Whereas there is evidence available showing that elite women served as librarians, calligraphers or teachers in, for example, Islamic Spain, we do not have evidence to suggest that there was a similar widespread phenomenon in

the Ilkhanate.[265] Mongol *khātūns* are certainly not mentioned in the available sources as participating directly in any cultural activities of this sort. However, this obviously does not mean that Mongol women were not involved in cultural activities or that they did not occupy certain positions in the development of Ilkhanid intellectual life. As we have seen thus far, they showed an active interest in new ideas, be they religious or secular, they were eager to buy and store products from afar and to put under their protection people with a myriad of ideas in their *ordos*. Yet, they do not appear in the sources as artists, scholars or cultural facilitators themselves. Perhaps the nomadic milieu of the Mongol Empire had something to do with this silence in the sources and perhaps Mongol women played a cultural role in the interior Mongol setup that was not accessible to the non-Mongol chroniclers upon whom we rely to reconstruct the history of Ilkhanid Iran.

However, once we distance ourselves from a strict Mongol *khātūn* scenario and open the floor to a broader group of women in the Mongol court, such as those Turkic women from Fars, Kerman or Anatolia, the picture becomes richer. For example, Padshah Khatun, originally a member of the Qutlughkhanid dynasty of Kerman and the wife of two Ilkhans (Abaqa and Geikhatu) is mentioned in some sources as having been a prolific poetess who dedicated her time at the Mongol court to religious endeavours. Different sources make reference to her writings and her passionate interest in religion. For instance, Shabankaraʾi mentions that, while she was in the company of her husband in Anatolia, 'she herself was a good scholar and wrote her own lines on the Holy Qurʾān'.[266] And, it was based on the inspiration she obtained from Hadiths and Islamic texts that she composed several poems that would be reproduced in some of the local chronicles of Kerman.[267] Similarly, some scattered poems were written by women in Anatolia during the Mongol period and nowadays remain mostly unpublished in manuscript form, such as the poem attributed to Ervugan Khatun, a woman who lived in north-western Anatolia in the thirteenth century and whose poems survived in a letter she wrote to her husband.[268] Likewise, immediately after the death of Abu Saᶜid, the last Ilkhan, in 1335, another women of mixed Mongol and Persian background left some poems of her own creation. The life and work of Jahan-Malik Khatun (d. c. 1382) has recently been described by Dominic P. Brookshaw, who also highlights the connection between this woman and her predecessor Padshah Khatun.[269]

The picture of female patronage that emerges from Mongol Iran is twofold: for a period of forty years, the *khātūns* of the central court were involved in the patronage of Christianity and to some extent Buddhism,

while, in the provinces of southern and western Iran, Islam continued to benefit from the tradition of female patronage established by the Saljuq dynasty.[270] While Doquz Khatun was paying for churches in Baghdad, Turkan Khatun of Shiraz was financing the construction of mosques, endowments by Despina Khatun were benefiting the Jacobites in Azerbaijan and, in Kerman, Terken Qutlugh Khatun was founding madrasas. The picture is by no means homogeneous and patronage of a single religion only begins to take shape after the conversion of Ghazan Khan, when the central court actively backed Islam and support for Christianity was slowly abandoned.[271] Rashid al-Din states that Ghazan Khan built a *khāniqāh* in Buzinjird in the province of Hamadan, which continued to be supported by his brother and successor Öljeitü.[272] Patronage of Islamic buildings by Mongol *khātūns* appeared as a post-1290s development in the central lands of the Ilkhanate. In addition, a tradition of women financing Sufi lodges, mosques or madrasas originally from the Saljuq period remained present in areas of the Ilkhanate under the rule of the local dynasties in Kerman and Fars. The patronage activity of women in Ilkhanid Iran not only illustrates the resources at the disposal of these women, but also shows them to have been in a similar position to perform pious acts traditionally reserved for male figures such as sultans, bureaucrats and amirs. More problematic to evidence is their involvement in the production of cultural and intellectual activities, but the appearance of some remarkable contributions to poetry and religious literature opens the field for future research in this field.

Notes

1. See, for example, M. Gronke, 'La religion populaire en Iran mongole', in D. Aigle (ed.), *L'Iran face à la domination mongole* (Tehran, 1997), pp. 205–30; A. Bausani, 'Religion under the Mongols', in J. A. Boyle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 538–49; J. Calmard, 'Le chiisme imamite sous les Ilkhans', in D. Aigle (ed.), *L'Iran face à la domination mongole* (Tehran, 1997), pp. 261–92; H. Cordier, 'Le Christianisme en Chine et en Asie Centrale sous les Mongols', *T'oung Pao* 18:1/2 (March–May 1917), pp. 49–113; P. Jackson, 'Mongol Khans and Religious Alliance: The Problems Confronting a Minister-Historian in Ilkhanid Iran', *Iran* 47 (2009), pp. 109–22; A. M. Khazanov, 'The Spread of World Religions in Medieval Nomadic Societies of the Eurasian Steppes', *Toronto Studies in Central and Inner Asia* 1 (1994), p. 12; J. P. Roux, *La religion des Turcs et des Mongols* (Paris, 1984), p. 20.
2. Jackson argues that this realpolitik is behind the description of 'religious tolerance' found in the sources and overstated by scholars in the field. See

P. Jackson, 'The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered', in R. Amitai and M. Biran (eds), *Mongols Turks and Others* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 245–90; for a similar perspective on the Qarakhitai, see M. Biran, 'True to Their Ways: Why the Qara Khitai Did Not Convert to Islam', in R. Amitai and M. Biran (eds), *Mongols Turks and Others* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 175–99.

3. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', pp. 16, 21.
4. ^{c}Alaʾ al-Din ^{c}Ata Malik Juvayni, *Tārīkh-i jahān-gushā*, ed. M. Qazvini, 3 vols (Leiden and London, 1912–37) (hereafter, *TJG*), I, pp. 28–9/Juvayni, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, trans. J. A. Boyle, 2 vols (Manchester, 1958; reprint 1997 with foreword by D. O. Morgan) (hereafter, Boyle), I p. 39. See also *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. I. de Rachewiltz, 2 vols (Leiden and Boston, 2004) (hereafter, *SH*), §245.
5. *TJG*, I, pp. 103–5/Boyle, I, pp. 80–1; Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Jāmi^{c} al-tawārīkh*, ed. M. Rawshan and M. Mūsavī, 4 vols (Tehran, 1373/1994) (hereafter, *JT*), I, pp. 499–500/*Jami^{c}u't-tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*, ed. S. S. Kuru and trans. W. M. Thackston, 3 vols (Boston, 1998) (hereafter, Thackston), pp. 246–7.
6. See C. P. Atwood, 'Validation by Holiness or Sovereignty: Religious Toleration as Political Theology in the Mongol World Empire of the Thirteenth Century', *The International History Review* 26:2 (June 2004), p. 254.
7. On this matter, see Jackson, 'Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered', pp. 245–90; Atwood, 'Validation by Holiness', p. 238; D. O. Morgan, *The Mongols* (Cambridge, MA, 1986; rev. edn 2007), p. 199.
8. See P. R. Katz, 'Writing History, Creating Identity: A Case Study of Xuanfeng Qinghui Tu', *Journal of Chinese Religions* 29 (2002), p. 165. On the Quanzhen sect, see P. Marsone, 'Accounts of the Foundation of the Quanzhen Movement: A Hagiographic Treatment of History', *Journal of Chinese Religions* 30 (2002), pp. 95–110; also L. Ts'un-Yan and J. Berlina, 'The "Three Teachings" in the Mongol-Yuan Period', in H. L. Chan and T. de Bary (eds), *Yuan Thought: Chinese Thought and Religion under the Mongols* (New York, 1982), pp. 479–509. A similar story is mentioned during Hülegü's campaign; see *JT*, II, pp. 1013/Thackston, p. 496. On the court of Qubilai at the end of his reign, see *JT*, II, p. 951/Rashid al-Din Tabib, *The Successors of Genghis Khan,* trans. J. A. Boyle (New York and London, 1971) (hereafter, *Successors*), pp. 302–3; Ts'un-Yan and Berlina, 'Three Teachings', pp. 508–9. See also M. Rossabi, 'Muslims in the Early Yüan Dynasty', in J. D. Langlois (ed.), *China under Mongol Rule* (Princeton, 1981), pp. 257–95. On Güyuk, see Fakhr al-Din Banakati, *'Tārīkh-i Banākatī': A General History from the Earliest Times to the 14th Century A.D.*, ed. J. She^{c}ar (Tehran, 1378/2000) (hereafter, *TB*), p. 393, and H. Kim, 'A reappraisal of Güyük Khan', in R. Amitai and M. Biran (eds), *Mongols, Turks and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*

(Leiden and Boston, 2005), p. 312. Marco Polo also noted the presence of a Christian governor in Manchuria; see M. Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian: Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*, trans. H. Yule, 2 vols (London, 1903) (hereafter, MP), II, p. 177.

9. See J. A. Boyle, ‘Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khans’, in J. A. Boyle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran,* vol. V (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 369–70.
10. The term Tenggerism is used ‘to refer to the fact that state formations among the Turco-Mongol societies of Inner Asia had the notion of “sky” (heaven) as a privileged ideological support’. See R. N. Hamayon, ‘Shamanism in Siberia: From Partnership in Supernature to Counter-Power in Society’, in N. Thomas and C. Humphrey (eds), *Shamanism, History, and the State* (Ann Arbor, 1994), p. 87, fn. 13; A. A. Znamenski, *Shamanism: Critical Concepts in Sociology* (London and New York, 2004), p. 176, fn. 14.
11. M. Eliade, *Shamanism: archaic techniques of ecstasy* (Princeton, 1964).
12. C. Humphrey, ‘Shamanic Practices and the State in Northern Asia’, in N. Thomas and C. Humphrey (eds), *Shamanism, History, and the State* (Ann Arbor, 1994), pp. 191–2.
13. Khazanov, ‘Spread of World Religions’, p. 12.
14. See I. Togan, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations: The Kerait Khanate and Chinggis Khan* (Leiden and New York, 1998), pp. 60–2; D. M. Dunlop, ‘The Keraits of Eastern Asia’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 11:2 (1944), pp. 277–8. The failure (or limited success) of Christianity in bringing nomads under the control of the Catholic, Orthodox or Nestorian creed has been connected to the ‘fear’ that the conversion to Christianity would put their independence in danger. See Khazanov, ‘Spread of World Religions’, p. 24.
15. On the origins of the Quanzhen sect, see Marsone, ‘Accounts of the Foundation’, pp. 95–110; D. Hawkes, ‘Quanzhen Plays and Quanzhen Masters’, *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient* 69 (1981), pp. 153–70; T. C. Yao, ‘Ch’iu Ch’u-Chi and Chinggis Khan’, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46:1 (June 1986), pp. 204–5.
16. Chih-ch^{c}ang Li, *The Travels of an Alchemist: The Journey of the Taoist Chʾang-Chʾun from China to the Hindukush at the Summons of Chingiz Khan, Recorded by His Disciple Li Chih-Ch^{c}ang*, trans. A. Waley (London, 1931) (hereafter, *TA*), p. 51.
17. See *TA*, p. 70.
18. On the sources dealing with the Buddhist–Taoist debate in the Yuan dynasty, see N. Kubo, ‘Prolegomena on the Study of the Controversies between Buddhists and Taoists in the Yüan Period’, *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* 26 (1968), pp. 40–2. On the debates, see Kubo, ‘Prolegomena’, pp. 43 and 45.
19. M. Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 144; Ts’un-Yan and Berlina, ‘Three Teachings’, p. 479.

20. For the use of this kind of propaganda in the Caucasus, see P. Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (Harlow and New York, 2005), p. 49.
21. Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abû'l-Faraj 1225–1286*, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge, 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1976; reprint, New Jersey, 2003) (hereafter, *Chronography*), p. 382; *TJG*, I, p. 81/Boyle, p. 104.
22. On the fortress of Alamut, see L. Lockhart and M. G. S. Hodgson, 'Alamūt', *EI2*; M. G. S. Hodgson, 'The Ismā^{c}īlī State', in J. A. Boyle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 422–82; F. Daftary, *Mediaeval Isma^{c}ili History and Thought* (New York, 1996); N. E. Jamal, *Surviving the Mongols: Nizari Quhistani and the Continuity of Ismaili Tradition in Persia* (London, 2002); B. Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam* (London, 2003).
23. Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History', pp. 303–35; T. May, 'A Mongol–Ismâ^{c}îlî Alliance?: Thoughts on the Mongols and Assassins', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 14:3 (2004), p. 239; Muhammad Nasawi, *Sīrat al-Sultān Jālāl al-Dīn Mankobiriti (Histoire du Sultan Djelal Ed-Din Mankobiriti)*, ed./trans. O. Houdas, vol I (Paris, 1891–5), p. 262.
24. G. Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance* (London and New York, 2003), p. 23.
25. Minhaj Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqāt-i Nāṣīrī*, ed. ^{c}A. Habibi, 2 vols (Kabul, 1342–3/1963–4), III, pp. 181–2/*'Tabaḳāt-i Nāṣirī': A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia, Including Hindustan, from A.H. 194 (810 A.D.), to A.H. 658 (1260 A.D.) and the Irruption of the Infidel Mughals into Islam*, trans. H. G. Raverty (London, 1881) (hereafter, Raverty), pp. 1189–96; *TJG*, III, p. 106/Boyle, pp. 617–18; *JT*, II, p. 974.
26. A similar interpretation could be made about defeating and executing the caliph in 1258. J. A. Boyle, 'Death of the Last 'Abbasid Caliph': A Contemporary Muslim Account', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 6:2 (1961), pp. 145–61. For a discussion on the sources for the fall of Baghdad, see G. M. Wickens, 'Nasir ad-Din Tusi on the Fall of Baghdad: A Further Study', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 7 (1962), pp. 23–35. On Tusi's rescue from Alamut and on his religious beliefs, see F. Daftary, *A Short History of the Ismailis: Traditions of a Muslim Community* (Princeton, 1998), p. 148.
27. A. Khanbaghi, *The Fire, the Star and the Cross: Minority Religion in Medieval and Early Modern Iran* (London and New York, 2006), p. 64. Rashid al-Din mentions that 'Arghun Khan was highly devoted to the *bakhshis* [Buddhist priests] and followed their path'. See *JT*, II, pp. 1177–8/Thackston, pp. 573–4; also Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, p. 176.
28. L. Lewisohn, 'Overview: Iranian Islam and Persianate Sufism', in L. Lewisohn (ed.), *The Heritage of Sufism: The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150–1500)* (Oxford, 1999), p. 33; H. Nasiri, 'Islam and the Encounter with Other Religions', in S. H. Nasr (ed.), *Sufi Essays* (London, 1972), pp. 123–51.

29. See the case of the Safawiyya order as an example. See Gronke, 'La religion populaire', p. 226.
30. R. Amitai, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk–Īlkhānid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 104.
31. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 12.
32. For an explanation of this female deity, see E. Lot-Falck, 'A propos d'Ätügän, déesse mongole de la terre', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 149:2 (1956), pp. 157–96.
33. T. T. Allsen, 'Princes of the Left Hand: An Introduction to the History of the Ulus of Orda in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries', *Archivum Eurasiae medii aevi* 5 (1985–7), p. 31. See MP, I, pp. 256–60; M. Polo, *The Description of the World*, trans. A. C. Moule and P. Pelliot, 2 vols (London, 1938) (hereafter, MP2), pp. 170–1.
34. *JT*, I, p. 150/Thackston, p. 81.
35. See *SH*, §63, and the comments on pp. 328–9; §174 and p. 629.
36. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 12. See examples of these practices in *SH*, §63; also C. Dawson, *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London and New York, 1955), p. 12.
37. See C. P. Atwood, 'Buddhism and Popular Ritual in Mongolian Religion: A Reexamination of the Fire Cult', *History of Religions* 36:2 (November 1996), p. 123.
38. *SH*, §70.
39. On the role of shamans in Altaic societies, see T. Gibson, 'Notes on the History of the Shamanic in Tibet and Inner Asia', *Numen* 44:1 (January 1997), pp. 39–59; E. Lot-Falck, 'A propos du terme chamane', *Études mongoles et sibériennes* 8 (1977), pp. 7–18; *JT*, I, pp. 643–4/*Successors*, pp. 38–9; *TJG*, III, pp. 3–4/Boyle, II, p. 549; *SH*, §272. W. Heissig, 'New Material on East Mongolian Shamanism', *Asian Folklore Studies* 49:2 (1990), p. 223. There is a reference in Bar Hebraeus which describes the shamans as 'women-men'; see *Chronography*, p. 366.
40. See the story of Töra Qaimish in Chapter 1.
41. See *SH*, §189, p. 110. On the ritual, see P. Kahn, 'Instruction and Entertainment in the Naiman Battle Text: An Analysis of §189 through §196 of *The Secret History of the Mongols*', in M. and W. Sclepp Gervers (eds), *Cultural Contacts: History and Ethnicity in Inner Asia* (Toronto, 1996), p. 98.
42. See, for example, the participation of a male shaman in the description of the 'rain magic' ritual mentioned by Rashid al-Din during Tolui's campaign in China. *JT*, I, p. 641/*Successors*, pp. 36–7. On the ritual, see 'Jadāmīshī' (جدامیشی) in G. Doerfer, *Turkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen: Unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung älterer Neupersischer Geschichtsquellen, vor Allem der Mongolen- und Timuridenzeit*, vol. I (Wiesbaden, 1963), pp. 286–9.

43. *JT*, II, pp. 802–3/*Successors*, p. 179; *TB*, p. 393.
44. *Chronography*, p. 411.
45. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 203.
46. Rashid al-Din does not accuse Oghul of sorcery but mentions that she suffered a nasty death in the *ordo* of Sorghaghtani Beki. *JT*, II, p. 839/*Successors*, p. 215. The punishment is also mentioned by Marco Polo in MP2, I, pp. 362–3.
47. *JT*, I, pp. 738–9/*Successors*, pp. 122–3.
48. *JT*, II, p. 1179/Thackston, p. 574.
49. *JT*, II, p. 1180/Thackston, p. 575.
50. See E. Hunter, 'Conversion of the Kerait to Christianity in A.D. 1007', *Zentralasiatische Studien* 22 (1989–91), pp. 142–63; Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 24. For an overview of Eastern Christianity, see M. Dickens, 'Nestorian Christianity in Central Asia' (2001), available at: www.oxuscom.com/Nestorian_Christianity_in_CA.pdf (accessed 24 February 2016), pp. 1–19.
51. See *TA*, p. 134. Another instance of women having direct involvement with the Taoist master is recorded when some former consorts of the Jin emperor of China went to welcome Changchun to the Mongol court; see *TA*, p. 73.
52. *TA*, p. 71.
53. *JT*, II, p. 865/*Successors*, p. 242.
54. M. Rossabi, 'The Reign of Khubilai Khan', in H. Franke and D. Twitchett (eds), *The Cambridge History of China: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907–1368* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 416; P. D. Buell, 'Some Royal Mongol Ladies: Alaqa-Beki, Ergene-Qatun and Others', *World History Connected* 7:1 (February 2010), available at: http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/7.1/buell.html (accessed 24 February 2016).
55. For translations of Chabui's biography in the *Yuan Shih*, see F. W. Cleaves, 'Biography of Empress Čabi in the *Yüan Shih*', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3/4:1 (1979–80), pp. 138–50; G. Q. Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy and Cultural Expression: Mongolian Royal Marriages from World Empire to Yuan Dynasty* (New York, 2008), pp. 239–41.
56. S. Bira, 'Qubilai Qa'an and 'Phags-Pa Bla-Ma', in R. Amitai and D. O. Morgan (eds), *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy* (Leiden, 1999), p. 242.
57. L. Petech, *Central Tibet and the Mongols: The Yüan Sa-Skya Period of Tibetan History*, Serie Orientale Roma, v. 65 (Rome, 1990), pp. 139–40.
58. Dunlop, 'Keraits of Eastern Asia', pp. 276–89.
59. See Figure 4.1.
60. *Chronography*, p. 435; Kirakos of Gandzakets^{c}i, *Kirakos Gandzakets'iʾs History of the Armenians*, trans. R. Bedrosian (New York, 1986), p. 327. On occasion they also promoted trusted religious figures to the ecclesiastical hierarchy; see E. A. Wallis Budge (trans.), *The Monks of Kublai Khan,*

Emperor of China (London, 1928) (hereafter, BS), p. 3; *JT*, II p. 963/ Thackston, p. 472.

61. *Chronography*, p. 398. There is a clear intention here to connect this Mongol woman with two adherents of medieval Christianity; see L. Olschki, *Marco Polo's Asia: An Introduction to his Description of the World Called 'Il Milione'* (Berkeley, 1960), pp. 381–97; J. Pirenne, *La légende du Prêtre Jean* (Strasbourg, 1992).
62. *JT*, II, p. 823/*Successors*, p. 200; *TB*, p. 400.
63. MP, I, p. 242.
64. The story is quoted by Yule in his translation of Marco Polo's travels. See MP, I, p. 243, fn. 2.
65. G. G. Guzman, 'The Encyclopedist Vincent of Beauvais and his Mongol Extracts from John of Plano Carpini and Simon of Saint-Quentin', *Speculum* 49:2 (April 1974), pp. 287–307.
66. See *JT*, I, pp. 196–7, 303/Thackston, pp. 104, 148–9; also *JT*, II, pp. 673–4/*Successors*, pp. 65–6. As suggested by Anne Broadbridge in a personal complication, it is possible that the story is referring to the marriage of Chinggis Khan to Ibaka Beki, niece of the Ong Khan of the Keraits.
67. Frère Hayton, *The Flower of Histories of the East*, trans. R. Bedrosian, http://rbedrosian.com/hetumint.htm (accessed February 2011) (hereafter, *FO*), ch. 24. See G. Lane, *Daily Life in the Mongol Empire* (Westport and London, 2006), p. 192.
68. *JT*, I, p. 100/Thackston, p. 55. She was the mother of Shirin Khatun and Bichqa Khatun by Möngke; see *JT*, II, p. 820/*Successors*, p. 198.
69. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 154; William of Rubruck, *The Journey of William of Rubruck to the Eastern Parts of the World, 1253–1255, as Narrated by Himself, with Two Accounts of the Earlier Journey of John of Pian de Carpini*, trans. W. W. Rockhill (London, 1900) (hereafter, WR2), p. 172.
70. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 166; WR2, pp. 190–1.
71. One example of this is the visit made to another royal wife in Möngke's court, a woman called Qutay Khatun (her name appears as *Cota* in Rubruck's account). Apart from Rubruck, the only reference we have found to her is in Rashid al-Din, where she is mentioned as one of Möngke's wives; see *JT*, II, p. 853/*Successors*, p. 228.
72. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 165; WR2, p. 190.
73. For *iascots*, see Glossary; see also L. V. Clark, 'The Turkic and Mongol Words in William of Rubruck's Journey (1253–1255)', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 93:2 (1973), p. 186. The full story can be found in Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 167–8; WR2, pp. 192–4. The ritual is compared by Yule with one narrated by Melchisédech Thévenot in the seventeenth century among the Barbary corsairs. See MP, I, pp. 242–3.
74. WR2, pp. 194–5.

75. The black stone was believed to bring fortune and prosperity; see WR2, p. 195 and fn. 1.
76. A similar case is mentioned regarding the Golden Horde in the fourteenth century when a wife of Ozbek Khan (r. 1312–42), one Taydula Khatun, received a Christian metropolitan named Aleksei to cure her illness. See D. Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences in the Steppe Frontier, 1304–1589* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 22.
77. See *JT*, I, pp. 161–2/Thackston, p. 87; *JT*, II, p. 820/*Successors*, p. 197; *SH*, §120.
78. *JT*, II, p. 820/*Successors*, p. 197.
79. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 161; WR2, p. 184.
80. M. Rossabi, 'Khubilai Khan and the Women in his Family', in W. Bauer (ed.), *Studia Sino-Mongolica: Festschrift Fur Herbert Franke* (Wiesbaden, 1979), p. 167. Rubruck is not sure if she was baptised or not, but he saw 'a silver bowl being brought' for the lady. See Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 161; WR2, p. 184.
81. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 161–2; WR2, pp. 184–5.
82. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 162–3; WR2, pp. 185–6. She often came to give presents to the Christian clergy and she joined them for a week of fasting. See Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 174.
83. *JT*, II, p. 963/Thackston, p. 472. The naqus was a clapper used instead of bells in Eastern Christian churches to summon worshippers.
84. Grigor of Akanc', 'History of the Nation of Archers', ed. and trans. P. Blake and R. Frye, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 12:3/4 (December 1949), p. 343 (hereafter, NA), p. 341.
85. J. Richard, *La papauté et les missions d'Orient au Moyen Age (XIIIe–XVe siècles)* (Rome, 1977), p. 102; E. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2009), p. 143; A. M. Talbot, 'Empress Theodora Palaiologina: Wife of Michael VIII', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 46 (1992; reprinted in *Women and Religious life in Byzantium* [Aldershot, 2001]), p. 296; I. Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars: Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185–1365* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 95.
86. For the early development of the Epiphany in Christianity, see P. M. Bassett, 'Epiphany', in E. Ferguson, M. P. McHugh and F. W. Norris (eds), *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, vol. I (A–K) (New York, 1999), pp. 381–2.
87. *Chronography*, p. 460.
88. The lady (Khalataita Khatun) was intending to go on hajj, but was prevented from doing so and returned to Baghdad to marry Caliph Nasir (r. 1158–1225). After her death, her sepulchre became a place of worship. See *Chronography*, p. 388. For the acceptance and use of *fatāwā* by Malika Khatun on divorce, see *TJG*, II, p. 156/Boyle, II, p. 424.
89. See, for example, the role of Terken Khatun in Sadid al-Din Muhammad Ghaznavi, *Maqāmāt-i Zhinda Pīl*, ed. H. Muʾayyad Sanandaji (Tehran,

1967), pp. 35–9, translated in *The Colossal Elephant and His Spiritual Feats: Shaykh Ahmad-e Jam: The Life and Legend of a Popular Sufi Saint of 12th Century Iran*, ed. H. Moayyad and trans. F. Lewis (Costa Mesa, 2004), pp. 105–9.

90. R. Shukurov, 'Harem Christianity: The Byzantine Identity of Seljuk Princes', in A. C. S. Peacock and S. N. Yildiz (eds), *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East* (London, 2012), pp. 115–50; B. De Nicola, 'The Ladies of Rūm: A Hagiographic View on Women in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Anatolia', *Journal of Sufi Studies* 3:2 (2014), pp. 132–56; B. De Nicola, 'Patrons or Murids? Mongol Women and Shaykhs in Ilkhanid Iran and Anatolia', *Iran Studies* 52 (2014), pp. 143–56.
91. Shams al-Din Ahmad Aflaki, *Manāqib al-ʿārifīn*, ed. T. Yazıcı, 2 vols (Ankara, 1959–61) (hereafter, *MR*), I, pp. 24–5/Shams al-Din Ahmad Aflaki, *The Feats of the Knowers of God: Manaqeb al-ʿArefin*, trans. J. O'Kane (Leiden, 2002), pp. 19–20. See G. Schubert, 'Sulṭān Walad, Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad-i Walad', *EI2*.
92. R. Amitai, 'Sufis and Shamans: Some Remarks on the Islamization of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42:1 (1999), pp. 27–46. See also C. Melville, 'Padshāh-i Islam: The Conversion of Sultan Mahmud Ghazan Khan', *Pembroke Papers* 1 (1990), pp. 159–77. In the case of the Golden Horde, DeWeese has noted that the presence of Sufis in the court might be more significant in the conversion of Berke than in that of Ozbek; see D. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tukles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park, 1994), p. 86. Some Mamluk sources also point to Sufi influence in the conversion to Islam of Töde Möngke (r. 1280–8) in the Golden Horde. See Baybars al-Mansuri, *Zubdat al-fikrah fī taʾrīkh al-hijrah*, ed. D. S. Richards (Beirut, 1998), pp. 227–8; E. Ashtor, 'Some Unpublished Sources for the Baḥri Period', *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 9 (1961), pp. 11–30. On the new and more cautious approach to the role of Sufis in the Islamisation of the Mongols, see R. Amitai, *Holy War and Rapprochement: Studies in the Relations between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Mongol Ilkhanate (1260–1335)* (Turnhout, 2013), pp. 66–8.
93. *JT*, II, p. 929/*Successors*, p. 301.
94. *JT*, II, pp. 929–30/*Successors*, p. 302.
95. *JT*, II, pp. 1129–30/Thackston, p. 551.
96. Melville, 'Padshāh-i Islam', p. 168.
97. Amitai, 'Sufis and Shamans', p. 34.
98. *JT*, II, p. 1256/Thackston, pp. 620–1.
99. *TB*, p. 439.
100. Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*, ed. B. Karimi, 2 vols (Tehran, 1367/1988–9) (hereafter, *JTK*), II, p. 801/Thackston, p. 560.
101. *JTK*, II, p. 905/Thackston, p. 622.
102. For an overview of Safavid rule in Iran, see H. R. Roemer, 'The Safavid

Period', in P. Jackson and L. Lockhart (eds), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VI (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 189–350; see also A. J. Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (London, 2006).

103. Ibn Bazzaz Ardabili, *Ṣafwat al-Ṣafā: dar tarjumah-i aḥvāl va aqvāl va karāmāt-i Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn Isḥāq Ardabīlī*, ed. G. R. Tabatabaʾi Majd (Tabriz, 1373/1994) (hereafter, *SS*), p. 912.
104. Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325–1354*, ed. and trans. H. A. R. Gibb (London, 2005) (hereafter, IB2), p. 147.
105. *SS*, p. 357.
106. *SS*, p. 792.
107. These women were, respectively, the sister of the last Ilkhan Abu Saʿid and the daughter of Möngke Temür and Abesh Khatun. On the anecdote, see *SS*, p. 1062. On *dhikr* (ذکر) as a ritual of healing, see A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, 1975), p. 237.
108. De Nicola, 'Ladies of Rūm', pp. 132–56.
109. ʿIsa ibn Junayd Shirazi, *Tadhkirah-ʾi Hazār Mazār*, ed. N. Visal (Shiraz, 1364/1985–6), pp. 300–1.
110. *JT*, II, pp. 1320–1/Thackston, p. 660.
111. *SS*, pp. 1102–3.
112. J. Pfeiffer, 'Reflections on a "Double Rapprochement": Conversion to Islam among the Mongol Elite during the Early Ilkhanate', in L. Komaroff (ed.), *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan* (Leiden, 2006), p. 379.
113. P. B. Golden, 'The Conversion of the Khazars to Judaism', in P. B. Golden, H. Ben-Shammai and A. Róna-Tas (eds), *The World of the Khazars: New Perspectives* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 123–62.
114. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 15.
115. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 13. For a comparative approach to the development of religion in different nomadic societies, see A. M. Khazanov, 'Muhammad and Jenghiz Khan Compared: The Religious Factor in World Empire Building', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35:3 (1993), pp. 461–79.
116. Melville, 'Padshāh-i Islam', pp. 176–7. He also suggests that the process of conversion was a bottom-up rather than a top-down phenomenon; see C. Melville, '"The Year of the Elephant": Mamluk–Mongol Rivalry in the Hejaz in the Reign of Abu Saʿid (1317–1335)', *Studia Iranica* 21:2 (1992), pp. 197–214.
117. On the idea of political motivation behind the conversion of nomadic empires, see T. May, 'Attitudes Towards Conversion among the Elite in the Mongol Empire', *Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast* (Bellingham, 2002), http://micel.pacificu.edu/easpac/2003/may.php3 (accessed in February 2011).
118. See Ts'un-Yan and Berlina, 'Three Teachings', pp. 479–509; on the relation between Confucianism and the Mongols, see B. Birge, 'Women and Confucianism from Song to Ming: The Institutionalization of Patrilineality',

in P. J. Smith and R. Von Glahn (eds), *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History* (Cambridge, MA, 2003), pp. 212–40.

119. See, for example, the reign of the committed Buddhist emperor of the Yuan dynasty, Shidibala Khan (r. 1320–3). H. Ch'i-ch'ing, 'Mid Yüan Politics', in H. Franke and D. Twitchett (eds), *The Cambridge History of China: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907–1368* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 490–560.
120. See J. Richard, *La papauté et les missions d'Orient au Moyen Age (XIIIe-XVe siècles)* (Rome, 1977), pp. 173–84; R. Amitai, 'Conversion of Tegüder Ilkhan to Islam', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 (2001), pp. 15–43; DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, pp. 67–158; Melville, 'Padshāh-i Islam', pp. 159–77.
121. M. Biran, 'The Chaghadaids and Islam: The Conversion of Tarmashirin Khan (1331–34)', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 122:4 (October–December 2002), pp. 742–52.
122. The best study of the narratives of conversion in the Mongol Empire is DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*; see also J. Pfeiffer, 'Conversion Versions: Sultan Oljeitu's Conversion to Shiʿism in Muslim Narrative Sources (709/1309)', *Mongolian Studies* 22 (1999), pp. 35–67.
123. *TJG*, I, p. 18/Boyle, I, p. 26.
124. BS, p. 174.
125. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 23.
126. *SH*, §194–6.
127. Eventually he would overthrow the Gur Khan, take the title for himself and, in 1211, come to rule the Qarakhitai Empire. See *SH*, p. 1048.
128. In Persian it reads دختری او را به بت پرستی الزام کرد; see *JT*, I, p. 464/Thackston, p. 230.
129. *TJG*, I, pp. 48, 52–3/Boyle, I, pp. 64, 70; Haydar Mirza, *A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia: Being the 'Tarikh-i-Rashidi' of Mirza Muhammad Haidar, Dughlat*, ed. N. Elias, trans. E. D. Ross (London, 1970), p. 290. Khwandamir reverses the story and suggests an unrealistic scenario in which Güshlüg converted the Qarakhitaid princess to Christianity; see Ghiyath al-Din Khwandamir, *Tārīkh-i ḥabīb al-siyar*, 4 vols (Tehran, 1333/1954) (hereafter, *THS*), III, p. 26/Ghiyath al-Din Khwandamir, *'Habibu's-Siyar': The Reign of the Mongol and the Turk*, trans. W. M. Thackston, vol. III (Cambridge, MA, 1994) (hereafter, Khwandamir), p. 14. Rubruck also mentions this conversion; see Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 122.
130. *TJG*, I, pp. 52–3/Boyle, I, p. 70.
131. In addition to this influence over the beliefs of their husbands, women in their roles as mothers, nurses or tutors in the Mongol court tried to influence the religion of the Mongol children. Not always successful in their attempts, they nevertheless functioned as channels or vectors that brought non-Mongol religions closer to the new generation of Mongol leaders. B. De Nicola, 'The Role of the Domestic Sphere in the Islamisation of the Mongols', in

A. Peacock (ed.), *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History* (Edinburgh, forthcoming).

132. On her, see Figure 4.1. *JT*, I, p. 161/Thackston, p. 86.
133. Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan*, p. 16, and 'Reign of Khubilai Khan', pp. 416–7.
134. Rossabi, 'Khubilai Khan', p. 168.
135. For example, the Liao and Chin dynasties; see J. Tao, *The Jurchen in Twelfth-Century China: A Study of Sinicization* (Seattle, 1976), pp. 106, 114; T. C. Yao, 'Buddhism and Taoism under the Chin', in H. C. Tillman *et al*. (eds), *China under Jurchen Rule: Essays on Chin Intellectual and Cultural History* (New York, 1995), pp. 145–80; K. A.Wittfogel and J. Feng, *History of Chinese Society: Liao (907–1225)* (Philadelphia, 1949), p. 29.
136. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 30.
137. I am referring here to the son of Ibaqa Beki, mentioned above. Rashid al-Din states that she 'had a son who was a ba'urchi [of Ögëtei]'. See *JT*, I, p. 673/*Successors*, p. 65.
138. On the Muslim population in China before the Mongols, see Rossabi, 'Muslims in the Early Yüan Dynasty', p. 289.
139. *JT*, II, p. 951/*Successors*, p. 324.
140. *JT*, II, p. 951/*Successors*, p. 324. On nurses and other 'domestic' elements in the conversion of the Mongols, see De Nicola, 'Role of the Domestic Sphere', forthcoming.
141. *JT*, II, p. 952/*Successors*, pp. 324–5.
142. R. W. Dunnell, 'The Anxi Principality: [Un]Making a Muslim Mongol Prince in Northwest China during the Yuan Dynasty', *Central Asiatic Journal* 57, Special Tangut Edition (2014), pp. 190–1.
143. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 224.
144. Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, p. 263.
145. T. Halbertsma, 'Nestorian Remains of Inner Mongolia: Discovery, Reconstruction and Appropriation', doctoral dissertation (University of Leiden, 2007), p. 33.
146. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 225–6. Also mentioned by Marco Polo; see MP, II, p. 460.
147. Halbertsma, 'Nestorian Remains', p. 33, quoting P. Pelliot, *Recherches sur les Chrétiens d'Asie Centrale et d'Extrême-Orient*, vol. 3: *Màr Ya(H) Bhallàhâ, Rabban Ṣàumâ et les princes Öngüt chrétiens*, eds J. Dauvillier and L. Hambis (Paris, 1973), p. 281.
148. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 24.
149. On Güyük, see *Chronography*, p. 411. On Möngke, see *FO*, ch. 19; Lane, *Daily Life*, p. 192.
150. A good anecdote occurs in Rubruck's account of a Mongol approaching him to be baptised. Before taking the step forward, though, he decides to go home 'to discuss the matter with his wife'. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 111. On the relationship between Christianity and the Islamisation of the Mongols,

see also D. Bundy, 'The Syriac and Armenian Christian Responses to the Islamification of the Mongols', in J. V. Tolan (ed.), *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam* (New York, 2000), pp. 33–54.

151. *Chronography*, p. 398; also in Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 190, 209.
152. Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols*, p. 150.
153. Despite this, the tale of the conversion of Mongol rulers was used by Mongol emissaries to attract the allegiance of European powers. See Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, p. 169; J. B. Chabot, 'Notes sur les relations du roi Argun avec l'Occident', *Revue de l'Orient latin* 10 (1894), p. 584.
154. Halbertsma, 'Nestorian Remains', p. 36.
155. Khanbaghi, *The Fire, the Star and the Cross*, p. 87.
156. On mothers and the faith of their children, see De Nicola, 'Role of the Domestic Sphere', forthcoming; the story of Despina Khatun's attempt to convert Baidu to Christianity should be seen in the light of the biased Christian sources. See MP, II, p. 476; *Chronography*, p. 505.
157. R. W. Bulliet, 'Conversion Stories in Early Islam', in M. Gervers and R. J. Bikhazi (eds), *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Toronto, 1990), p. 128.
158. P. Crone and M. Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 3–78.
159. Bulliet, 'Conversion Stories', pp. 125–9.
160. Quoted in M. G. Morony, 'The Age of Conversions: A Reassessment', in M. Gervers and R. J. Bikhazi (eds), *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Toronto, 1990), p. 138.
161. Morony, 'Age of Conversions', pp. 138–9.
162. R. Bulliet, 'The Conversion Curve Revisited', in A. Peacock (ed.), *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History* (Edinburgh, forthcoming).
163. D. DeWeese, 'Islamization in the Mongol Empire', in N. Di Cosmo, A. J. Frank and P. B. Golden (eds), *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 120–34.
164. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 21.
165. Melville, 'Padshāh-i Islam', pp. 159–77.
166. Pfeiffer, 'Reflections', pp. 372–6; DeWeese, 'Islamization', pp. 120–34; De Nicola, 'Role of the Domestic Sphere', forthcoming.
167. See, for example, M. F. Köprülü, *Influence du chamanisme turco-mongol sur les ordres mystiques müsülmans* (Istanbul, 1929), pp. 5–19; V. L. Ménage, 'The Islamization of Anatolia', in N. Levtzion (ed.), *Conversion to Islam* (New York, 1979), pp. 52–67; J. Fletcher, 'The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46:1 (1986), pp. 11–50; Roux, *La religion des Turcs*; Amitai, 'Sufis and Shamans', pp. 27–46.

168. I. Vásáry, 'History and Legend in Berke Khan's Conversion to Islam', in D. Sinor (ed.), *Aspects of Altaic Civilization, Three: Proceedings of the Thirtieth Meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference, Bloomington, Indiana* (Bloomington, 1990), p. 256.
169. For example, Ahmad ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhab al-Nuwayri. *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. M. M. Qumayhah and I. Shams al-Din (Beirut, 2004–5), vols 26–7, pp. 244–5. Also mentioned by DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, pp. 84–5, who refers to an edition of Nuwayri from 1986 published in Cairo; V. G. Tizengauzen (ed./trans.), *Sbornik Materialov, Otnosiashchikhsia k istorii Zolotoi Ordy, 2, Izvlecheniia iz Persidskikh Sochinenii Sobrannye V.C. Tizengauzenom i Obrabotannye A. A. Romaskevichen I S. L. Volinym* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1941; trans. into Turkish by I. H. Izmirli as *Altınordu devleti tarihine ait metinler*, Istanbul, 1941), pp. 249–50; V. G. Tizengauzen (ed./trans.), *Sbornik Materialov, Otnosiashchikhsia k istorii Zolotoi Ordy, 1, Tizvlecheniia iz Sochinenii Arabiskikh* (St Petersburg, 1884), pp. 130–1. See DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, p. 84, fn. 28.
170. She was the daughter of Nogai (d. 1299–1300), son of Tatar, a grandson of Jochi by his seventh son Bo'al. See *JT*, I, pp. 736–7/*Successors*, p. 113.
171. It is not clear in Rashid's account where he is defined as an 'Uighur'; see *JT*, I, p. 644/*Successors*, p. 126. The story is also mentioned in *TB*, pp. 396–7.
172. For the Golden Horde in this period, see A. F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge and New York, 2008), pp. 59–61.
173. *SS*, p. 899. She was the daughter of Geikhatu Ilkhan and Dondi Khatun, the daughter of Aq Buqa, son of Elgai Noyan. See *JT*, II, pp. 1189, 1215/ Thackston, pp. 580, 593.
174. See *JT*, II, p. 1189/Thackston, pp. 579–80. For her stay in Anatolia, see the reference to her return to the Ilkhanid court in 1293 in *JT*, II, p. 1196/ Thackston, p. 583.
175. See Pfeiffer, 'Reflections', p. 374.
176. Some close interaction between Christian princesses in the court of the Saljuqs of Rum and Sufi shaykhs has been, nonetheless, documented. See De Nicola, 'Ladies of Rūm', pp. 148–9.
177. Pfeiffer, 'Reflections'.
178. Amitai, 'Sufis and Shamans', pp. 27–9; on the Islamisation of the Mongols in general, see DeWeese, 'Islamization', pp. 120–34.
179. See *SS*, p. 912; on unveiled Mongol women, see IB2, p. 147.
180. De Nicola, 'Role of the Domestic Sphere', forthcoming.
181. See O. Safi, *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry* (Chapel Hill, 2006), pp. 93–104; D. Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites and Turkish Rulers: A History of Isfahan in the Saljuqid Period* (London, 2009), pp. 123–9; B. Finster, 'The Saljuqs

as Patrons', in R. Hillenbrand (ed.), *The Art of the Saljuqs in Iran and Anatolia* (Costa Mesa, 1994), pp. 17–28; during the Fatimid period see D. Cortese and S. Calderini, *Women and the Fatimids in the World of Islam* (Edinburgh, 2006), p. 176.

182. M. Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 53.
183. A. Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia: Aspects of Administrative, Economic and Social History* (New York, 1988), pp. 270–1; Rashid al-Din Tabib, *The History of the Saljuq Turks from the 'Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh': An Ilkhanid Adaptation of the 'Saljūq-nāma' of Ẓahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī*, ed. C. E. Bosworth and trans. K. A. Luther (Richmond, 2001), pp. 169–70.
184. She was the wife of the Caliph al-Qaʾim (d. 1075) and then married to ʿAlaʾ al-Dawla ʿAli, the Kakuyid of Yazd. See Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 271; C. E. Bosworth, 'Political and Dynastic History of the Iranian World (A.D. 1000–1217)', in J. A. Boyle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V (Cambridge, 1968), p. 48; Ahmad ibn Husayn Katib, *Tārīkh-i jadīd-i Yazd*, ed. I. Afshar (Tehran, 1966; reprint 1978), pp. 60, 67–9.
185. On her see Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 271.
186. Abu al-ʿAbbas Zarkub Shirazi, *Shirāz-nāma*, ed. I. V. Javadi (Tehran, 1350/1972) (hereafter, *SRN*), p. 45.
187. E. S. Wolper, 'Princess Safwat al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn and the Production of Sufī Buildings and Hagiographies in Pre-Ottoman Anatolia', in D. F. Ruggles (ed.), *Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies* (New York, 2000), p. 49.
188. I. M. Rogers, 'Waqf and Patronage in Seljuk Anatolia: The Epigraphic Evidence', *Anatolian Studies* 26 (1976), p. 92.
189. Khazanov, 'Muhammad and Jenghiz Khan', p. 468. A reference to the status of the Jews was made by Juvayni; see *TJG*, III, p. 78/Boyle, II, p. 599.
190. Atwood, 'Validation by Holiness', p. 247.
191. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, pp. 99–137.
192. I. W. Limbert, *Shiraz in the Age of Hafez: The Glory of a Medieval Persian City* (Seattle, 2004), p. 43; L. Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders: The Architectural Patronage of Hadice Turhan Sultan* (Aldershot, 2006); Ü. Bates, 'The Architectural Patronage of Ottoman Women', *Asian Art* 6:2 (1993), pp. 50–65. For the Safavid period, see, for example, Newman, *Safavid Iran*, p. 108. On female patronage among Timurid women, see P. Soucek, 'Timurid Women: A Cultural Perspective', in G. R. Hambly (ed.), *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Patronage and Piety* (New York, 1998), pp. 199–226.
193. On Yelü Chucai, see I. Rachewiltz *et al.*, *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200–1300)* (Wiesbaden, 1993), pp. 136–71.

194. I. de Rachewiltz, 'The *Hsi-Yu Lu* by Yeh-Lü Ch'u-Ts'ai', *Monumenta Serica* 21 (1962), (hereafter, *HYL*), p. 29.
195. *HYL*, p. 29.
196. MP, I, p. 319.
197. *TA*, p. 92.
198. *TJG*, II, pp. 77–8/Boyle, II, p. 599.
199. MP, I, p. 186. See Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, pp. 100–1, for the benefits granted by Mongol rulers to Christian clerics in the early empire.
200. For example, the endowments made by Chinggis Khan and Ögetei to build temples for the monks of the Quanzhen sect; see *TA*, pp. 135–7, 18.
201. *JT*, II, 823/*Successors*, p. 200; see also *TJG*, III, pp. 8–9/Boyle, II, pp. 552–3.
202. *TB*, p. 400.
203. *Chronography*, p. 398; R. A. Skelton *et al*., *The Vinland Map and the Tartar Relation* (New Haven and London, 1965), p. 76.
204. *TA*, p. 16. On female patronage of Taoism in Jin China, see Yao, 'Buddhism and Taoism under the Chin', p. 159. Marco Polo saw an idol of the Buddha in a temple that was founded by a Tangut lady in 1103; see MP, I, p. 221.
205. The edict is discussed in F. W. Cleaves, 'The Sino-Mongolian Inscription of 1240', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 23 (1960–1), pp. 62–75, and I. de Rachewiltz, 'Some Remarks on Töregene's Edict of 1240', *Papers in Far Eastern History* 25 (1981), pp. 38–63.
206. De Rachewiltz, 'Some Remarks on Töregene's Edict', p. 49.
207. De Rachewiltz, 'Some Remarks on Töregene's Edict', p. 45.
208. *JT*, II, p. 808; *JTK*, p. 573/*Successors*, pp. 184, 188.
209. *TJG*, III, p. 80/Boyle, II, pp. 600–1.
210. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 162.
211. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 172.
212. Morgan, *The Mongols*, p. 135.
213. NA, pp. 341, 343.
214. *FO*, ch. 27.
215. *JT*, II, p. 964/Thackston, p. 472.
216. BS, p. 223.
217. BS, pp. 303–4.
218. Another case of personal protection being given to the Nestorian Catholicos by a woman is mentioned in BS, p. 37.
219. For an interpretation of the accounts of Berke's conversion, see DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, p. 86.
220. Anonymous, *Histoire de la Géorgie: depuis l'Antiquité jusqu'au XIXe siècle*, trans. M. Brosset (St Petersburg, 1849), p. 573.
221. Known in Byzantium as Maria Palaiologina, she was the daughter of Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos. J. Herrin, *Unrivalled Influence: Women and Empire in Byzantium* (Princeton, 2013), pp. 313–14. She is also

mentioned as a wife of Geikhatu in Abu al-Qasim ^{c}Abd Allah ibn ^{c}Ali Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Ūljāytū*, ed. M. Hambly (Tehran, 1384/2005), p. 8.

222. BS, p. 163.
223. *Chronography*, p. 467.
224. BS, p. 165.
225. The mother of the future ruler Öljeitü (r. 1304–17), who was responsible for baptising him at an early age. See BS, p. 283.
226. *JT*, II, pp. 1179/Thackston, p. 574.
227. I. Vaziri, *Buddhism in Iran: An Anthropological Approach to Traces and Influences* (New York, 2012), pp. 111–34; A. Azad, 'Three Rock-Cut Cave Sites in Iran and their Ilkhanid Buddhist Aspects Reconsidered', in A. Akasoy et al. (eds), *Islam and Tibet: Interactions Along the Musk Routes* (Farnham, 2011), pp. 209–30; Y. Kadoi, 'Buddhism in Iran under the Mongols: An Art-Historical Analysis', in T. Gacek and J. Pstrusińska (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth Conference of the European Society for Central Asian Studies* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2009), pp. 171–80.
228. See Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan*, p. 16.
229. *JTK*, II, p. 914/Thackston, p. 626; *JT*, II, pp. 1177–9/Thackston, pp. 573–5.
230. BS, p. 203.
231. MP, I, p. 92.
232. *Chronography*, p. 505.
233. *JTK*, II, p. 906/Thackston, p. 622.
234. Thackston, p. 626, fn. 3.
235. Khanbaghi, *The Fire, the Star and the Cross*, p. 72.
236. One of the daughters of Tegüder Ahmad; see *JT*, II, p. 1123/Thackston, p. 547; Kamal al-Din ^{c}Abd al-Razzaq Samarqandi, *Maṭla^{c}-i sa^{c}dayn va majma^{c}-i baḥrayn*, ed. A. Navaʾi (Tehran, 1372/1993), p. 75. She allegedly died fighting side by side with her husband in June–July 1319. See C. Melville, *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Il-Khanate, 1327–1337: A Decade of Discord in Mongol Iran* (Bloomington, 1999), pp. 105–6; B. De Nicola, 'Women's Role and Participation in Warfare in the Mongol Empire', in K. Latzel, S. Satjukow and F. Maubach (eds), *Soldatinnen: Gewalt und Geschlecht im Krieg vom Mittelalter bis Heute* (Paderborn, 2010), pp. 103–4.
237. She was Qutlughshah Khatun, the daughter of Irinjin by a woman called Saridjeh (Hafiz-i Abru, *Ẓayl-i Jāmi^{c} al-tawārīkh-i Rashīdī: shāmil-i vaqāʾi^{c}-i 703–781 hijrī-i qamarī*, ed. K. Bayani (Tehran, 1350/1971) (hereafter, HA), p. 72/Hafiz-i Abru, *Chronique des rois mongols en Iran*, ed. and trans. K. Bayani, 2 vols (Paris, 1936) (hereafter, HAB), p. 51) and she was married to Öljeitü. See Melville, *Fall of Amir Chupan*, pp. 104–7; L. J. Ward, '*Zafarnāmah* of Mustawfī', doctoral dissertation (Manchester University, 1983), pp. 637–8; HA, p. 100/HAB, p. 77.
238. BS, p. 213.
239. For example, the defeat of the Christian Amir Irinjin by the forces of the

pro-Muslim Amir Chopan in 1319 deprived Christians of a powerful ally in the Mongol court. See Melville, *Fall of Amir Chupan*, p. 11.

240. For example, the financial support given by Hülegü to Nasir al-Din Tusi – mostly for scientific research – shows that Muslims were by no means left out of court patronage. See M. Minovi and V. Minorsky, 'Nāṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī on Finance', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 10:3 (1940), pp. 755–89.
241. B. De Nicola, 'The Queen of the Chaghatayds: Orghīna Khātūn and the Rule of Central Asia', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26:1–2 (2016), pp. 107–20.
242. V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, 4 vols (Leiden, 1956–63), I, pp. 46–7.
243. ᶜAbd Allah ibn Fazl Allah Vassaf, *Taḥrīr-i tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, ed. ᶜA. M. Ayati (Tehran, 2004) (hereafter, *TV*), p. 15.
244. Probably Oljatay.
245. Hamd Allah Mustawfi Qazvini, *The Geographical Part of the 'Nuzhat al-Qulūb' Composed by Hamd Allah Mustawfi of Qazwin in 740 (1340)*, trans. G. le Strange (Leiden and London, 1915–19; reprint 2008), p. 69; R. Zipoli, 'The Tomb of Arghūn', in *Primo Convegno Internationale sull'Arte dell'Iran Islamico* (Venice and Tehran, 1978), pp. 7–37.
246. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, p. 192.
247. C. Melville, 'Bologān (Būlūgān) Kātun', *EIr*.
248. On the process of 'Persianisation' among the Mongols, see C. Melville, 'History and Myth: The Persianisation of Ghazan Khan', in É. M. Jeremiás (ed.), *Irano-Turkic Cultural Contacts in the 11th–17th Centuries* (Piliscsaba, 2003), p. 143. On Islamisation, see Melville, 'Padshāh-i Islam', p. 171; De Nicola, 'Role of the Domestic Sphere', forthcoming.
249. For a discussion of this, see K. Quade-Reutter, '"Denn Sie Haben Einen Unvollkommenen Verstand" – Herrschaftliche Damen Im Grossraum Iran in Der Mongolen – Und Timuridenzeit (ca. 1250–1507)', doctoral dissertation (Albert-Ludwig Universität, Freiburg, 2003), p. 119.
250. Anonymous, *Tārīkh-i Shāhī-yi Qarā-Khitāʾiyān*, ed. M. I. Bastani Parizi (Tehran, 1976–7) (hereafter, *TSQ*), pp. 235, 333.
251. J. Aubin, '*Émirs mongols et vizirs persane dans les remous de l'acculturation* (Paris, 1995)', pp. 34–5; B. Üçok, *Femmes turques souverraines et regents dans les états islamiques*, trans. A. Çamali (n. d.), pp. 64–5. A useful table summarising Terken's charitable foundations can be found in Quade-Reutter, 'Denn Sie Haben', pp. 145–53; De Nicola, 'Patrons or Murids?', pp. 143–56.
252. The name of the madrasa is given as 'Madrase-ye terkani'; see *TSQ*, pp. 315–16. Also *THS*, III, p. 269/Khwandamir, p. 155.
253. In 'the Mongol fashion' is specifically referring to her marriage to Geikhatu; see Hamd Allah Mustawfi Qazvini, *The 'Ta'rikh-i-Guzida': or 'Select History' of Hamduʾllah Mustawfí-i-Qazwini*, ed. and trans. E. G. Browne, 2

vols (Leiden and London, 1910–13), p. 133; also Lane, *Daily Life*, p. 245. For her marriage to Abaqa, see *JT*, II, p. 934/*Successors*, p. 305; B. Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran: Politik, Verwaltung und Kultur der Ilchanzeit 1220–1350* (Leipzig, 1939), p. 154.

254. Shabankaraʾi, *Majmaʿ al-ansāb*, ed. H. Muhaddith (Tehran, 1363/1984) (hereafter, *MA*), p. 201; Üçok, *Femmes turques*, p. 78; D. P. Brookshaw, ‘Odes of a Poet-Princess: The Ghazals of Jahān-Malik Khātūn’, *Iran* 43 (2005), pp. 173–95; Rogers, ‘Waqf and Patronage’, pp. 76–7; Mahmud b. Muhammad al-Karim Aqsaraʿi, *Mosāmerat al-akhbār* (Ankara, 1944), pp. 146–7, quoted in C. Melville, ‘Anatolia under the Mongols’, in K. Fleet (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. I (Cambridge, 2009), p. 76; De Nicola, ‘Patrons or Murids?’, pp. 149–50.
255. *MA*, p. 202.
256. The involvement of women in the patronage of Sufi leaders can also be found in the hagiographical material. See, for example, the role of ʿEsmati Khatun in financing a mosque for Rumi’s father Bahaʾ al-Din Valad in Anatolia. See *MR*, I, pp. 24–5/Aflaki, *Feats of the Knowers of God*, pp. 19–20.
257. *SRN*, p. 45; Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 150; Limbert, *Shiraz*, p. 64.
258. *JT*, II, pp. 935–6/*Successors*, pp. 306–7; *SRN*, p. 62.
259. Limbert, *Shiraz*, pp. 16, 63.
260. Brookshaw, ‘Odes of a Poet-Princess’, pp. 187–8, fn. 44.
261. ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar Baidawi, *Niẓām al-tawārīkh*, ed. M. H. Muhaddith (Tehran, 1382/2003), p. 125; *JT*, II, pp. 936–7/*Successors*, p. 307.
262. See D. Aigle, *Le Fars sous la domination mongole: politique et fiscalité, XIIIe–XIVe s.* (Paris, 2005), pp. 131–2.
263. Q. Ghani, *Tārīkh-i ʿaṣr-i Ḥāfiẓ*, vol. I, in *Baḥs̱ dar ās̱ār va Afkār va Aḥvāl-i Ḥāfiẓ* (Tehran, 1380/2001–2), pp. 64–5, quoted in Brookshaw, ‘Odes of a Poet-Princess’, p. 188, fn. 45.
264. *SRN*, p. 93. Also mentioned in *TV*, p. 345, and Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, pp. 275–6.
265. On women’s intellectual presence in Al-Andalus, see, among others, M. J. Viguera Molins, *La Mujer en Al-Andalus: reflejos históricos de su actividad y categorías sociales* (Madrid, 1989), and ‘Asluhu Lu’l Ma’ali: On the Social Status of Andalusi Women: The Legacy of Muslim Spain’, in S. K. Jayyusi and M. Marín (eds), *The Legacy of Muslim Spain* (Leiden, 1992), pp. 709–24; A. Schippers, ‘The Role of Women in Medieval Andalusian Arabic Story-telling’, in F. de Jong (ed.), *Verse and the Fair Sex: Studies in Arabic Poetry and in the Representation of Women in Arabic Literature* (Utrecht, 1993), pp. 139–52.
266. *MA*, p. 201; Nasir al-Din Munshi Kirmani, *Simṭ al-ulā lil-Ḥaẓrat al-ʿulyā dar ‘Tārīkh-i Qarā-khitāʾīyān-i Kirmān’*, ed. ʿA. Iqbal (Tehran, 1362/1983–4) (hereafter, *SU*), pp. 70–9; *JT*, II, pp. 934–5/*Successors*, pp. 305–6.
267. *MA*, pp. 201–2. Also in *SU*, p. 70; Uçok, *Femmes turques*, pp. 81–5.

268. Suleymaniye Library, Istanbul, ms. Fatih 5046, ff. 123a–124a; O. Turan, *Türkiye Selçuklulari hakkında resmî vesikalar: metin, tercüme ve araştırmalar* (Ankara, 1958), pp. 168–71.
269. Brookshaw, 'Odes of a Poet-Princess', pp. 173–95.
270. A continuation of this practice has also been noted among Timurid women. See M. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 156–8. For a comparison of female patronage in Anatolia between the Saljuq and the Ottoman dynasties, see Ü. Bates, 'The Architectural Patronage of Ottoman Women', *Asian Art* 6:2 (1993), pp. 50–65.
271. For the continuation of the patronage of religious buildings under the Timurid dynasty, see L. Golombek, *The Timurid Shrine of Gazur Gah* (Toronto, 1968), pp. 13–20.
272. *JT*, II, p. 1218/Thackston, p. 597.

6

Concluding Remarks

It is an inherent shortcoming of the profession that historians end up being at least partially inconclusive in their research and unavoidably biased in their conclusions. The chronological distance from the object of study and the challenges presented by the available source materials are commonly responsible for the generally allusive conclusions that medieval historians deliver at the end of their work. This study is not an exception and, unfortunately, is subject to similar, if not greater, challenges than other surveys on the role of medieval women in general, and on the Mongol Empire in particular. The general lack of archival documentation adds further complications to this enterprise, since the history of the Mongol Empire needs to be interpreted based mostly on 'literary sources', be they historical chronicles, hagiographies or travel accounts, to name a few of those used in this work. In addition, this particular research has had the added difficulty of dealing with not only sources produced mostly by the conquered peoples, but also the always elusive role of women in pre-modern societies. Despite these problems, it is hoped that this book has offered some insights into the status and role of women in the Mongol Empire through the two lines of analysis that have been presented. On the one hand, this book has examined female participation in politics, economy and religion, and, on the other, it has focused on the evolution, continuity and transformation of the role of the *khātūns* as they moved from their traditional Mongolian environment into an empire that brought them face to face with new cultures, religions and conceptions of the role of women.

That the role of women among the medieval Mongols was a prominent one can already be inferred from the fact that a woman existed in the Mongol origin myth, linking the divine with the human. This can be viewed as symbolic of a culture in which the role of women was highly significant and carefully considered. However, this high concept of the feminine in the Mongol understanding of the divine did not prevent medieval Mongolian society from being patriarchal and patrilineal in its social organisation, though it nevertheless prepared the ground for influential women to emerge

in different areas of society. In the last decades of the twelfth century, and up until 1206, women in Mongolia influenced the political balance of the Steppe. When their husbands died, they assumed control of the extended family, took control over property and, in their roles as mothers, wives or concubines, even acted as advisors to male leaders. This was the case, if we can trust the narrative in *The Secret History of the Mongols*, with the early life of Chinggis Khan, whose mother and chief wife are portrayed as the authors of key political decisions that in many ways guided the new ruler towards his supremacy over other Mongol tribes.

The exercising of such influence was not unique to Mongol women, being characteristic also of other medieval nomadic and semi-nomadic populations. Among the Saljuq Turks, for example, women actively intervened in political affairs to the extent that they provoked reactions from Persian statesmen and religious leaders, such as Nizam al-Mulk. Further east, in Asia, the (originally Manchurian) Khitan tribe that established the Liao dynasty of Northern China recorded that women had participated autonomously in politics since the tenth century, a tradition that continued up to the thirteenth century when they moved westwards into Central Asia. Providing precedents for the Mongol *khātūns*, these Eurasian elite women also advised their husbands and sons on political matters and interceded to protect dissident amirs, officials and religious leaders. However, when we examine how the role of women in politics evolved, some consistent differences between these populations emerge. The establishment of a long-standing female regency sets the Mongol Empire apart from other societies – such as the Saljuqs of Iran – as well as from pre-imperial Mongolia. The emergence of the ruling *khātūns* in the mid-thirteenth century (in the absence of any Mongolian model for women assuming power) needs to be contextualised within the Central Asian Qarakhitai dynasty, which had provided the institutional precedents allowing Mongol *khātūns* to go one step further from having an influential role in politics to becoming recognised as rulers of the empire (*Herrschaft*).[1]

The institution of women's regency among the Mongols reached its apogee in the 1240s when two women were appointed empress regents for the whole united Mongol Empire. One of them, Töregene Khatun, became the first woman to be recognised as ruler, to have authority over government and to even delegate some of this authority to other women such as her advisor Fatima Khatun. The period is also marked by the interesting figure of a 'ruler from behind the scenes' like Sorghaghtani Beki and her political manoeuvres to promote her son Möngke (r. 1251–9) to the Great Khanate in 1250s. During Möngke's reign, the institution continued in those areas of the Mongol Empire where the nomadic lifestyle

was predominant. Among the territories of both the Chaghataid Khanate in Central Asia and the Golden Horde in Russia, women occupied the highest political positions for a while as rulers on behalf of their sons (for example, Orghina Khatun and Boraqchin Khatun). However, once the Mongols settled in Iran, female regency disappeared from the court and women returned to their earlier role in politics, still prominent but without the nominal recognition granted to rulers of the Ilkhanate. On the other hand, towards the south of the realm in areas such as Kerman and Shiraz, local subject dynasties did promote women to the throne.

As the Ilkhanate developed into the fourteenth century, there was a process of centralisation, which progressively increased the Mongol court's involvement in the affairs of the provinces. This in turn led to the gradual removal of women from power in these areas, a process underpinned by the acculturation and Islamisation of the Mongols. Nevertheless, when the Ilkhanid dynasty imploded and divided after the death of Abu Sa^{c}id in 1335, the internal fights for supremacy among the descendants of the Mongols triggered the phenomenon of female rule in Iran for the first time in eighty years of Mongol dominion over the Middle East. This occurred when, in 1339, Sati Beg was named 'Sultana of Iran' for a short period as a puppet ruler in the hands of one of the contenders to the throne. This episode can be seen as the exception that tests the rule of female kingship in the Ilkhanate. The promotion of a woman to the throne seems to have been, in this case, a final attempt to cleave to some 'traditional' nomadic values as the Mongols confronted their more acculturated strata of nobility in Iran. The evolution of women's regency in the western parts of the Mongol Empire appears to have been the result of a negotiation between the nomadic viewpoint and that of a sedentary population reluctant to institutionalise female power. The course of this regency and of women's political influence reflect, if only partially, a process of acculturation undergone by the Mongols in the Middle East.

Looking into the role of women in other aspects of Mongol society, such as the economy, helps to understand the prominent political role assumed by the *khātūns* in the empire. Without their economic autonomy and control over their properties, it is difficult to comprehend how women could have reached such high positions in the Mongol power structure. With this in mind, Chapter 4 investigated certain aspects of female economic activity among pre-imperial and imperial Mongol women. We have found that the institution of the *ordo* in nomadic society was vitally important to the *khātūns* in particular, and to the empire as a whole. We have discovered that the Mongol women belonging to the royal families had under their command the administration of these camps which con-

tained not only valuable objects and cattle but also people, all of which played a fundamental role in providing women with administrative, political and military support. The *ordo* appears to have existed before the rise of Chinggis Khan, but it was only after the Mongol expansion that the constant flow of properties, animals and people provided these camps with the opportunity to expand – like the empire itself – in size and wealth and to become such important economic units.

We have also seen that not every noble lady was allowed to control an *ordo*. This privilege was, in theory, granted to the chief wives of the Mongol princes who had given their husbands at least one son to continue the line of succession. However, this rule was not always adhered to and, as the empire grew and the Mongols became a minority within it – with a considerably decreased life expectancy and a lowered fertility rate – some women acquired *ordos* even when they were not able to provide a male child (for example, Doquz Khatun and Bulughan Khatun 'Bozorg', among others). Having established how women acquired an *ordo*, it is also important to assess how much autonomy they had over it. The sources stress the fact that these camps were given to the women by their male relatives – husbands or sons – and, after the death of a given *khātūn*, it was again the male members of the family who had the right to reallocate the vacant *ordo* to a new *khātūn*. This is an important point, since it is consistent with the patriarchal and patrilineal organisation of the Mongols. Nevertheless, once a woman had received one of these encampments, she was able to keep it for life, enjoying its economic usufruct and political influence for her own benefit.

Furthermore, the wealth of these *ordos* has also been examined, though there are not many references to this in the sources. Women participated in at least three spheres of the Mongol accumulation of wealth. First, together with the princes, generals and amirs, women had a share of the booty from the Mongol conquest of Eurasia. As the empire grew, they incorporated cattle, people and luxury goods into their *ordos*, which in due course became important economic units in their own right. Second, this accumulation of wealth attracted merchants from across Eurasia who participated in business ventures involving the female encampments and distant cities of the empire. Mongol policies favoured trade, which created for merchants and caravanners a secure environment in which to carry out their commercial transactions, paving the way for enterprises which spread from China to Europe and from Russia to India. Pertinently, this boom was not engineered solely by the merchants. Women participated not only as consumers of goods, but as investors in these empire-wide commercial transactions. Unfortunately, these adventures eventually provoked

financial chaos, which rulers such as Möngke tried to control through tax reforms and measures to control the merchants in the 1250s. Third, when the Mongols settled in Iran, a new source of income became available: agriculture. The dual tax system imposed by the Mongols on Iran tried to maximise revenues. In this new way of acquiring resources, women were once again active participants. Some of the *khātūns* were allocated land, which they taxed directly, using their own officials as collectors. This system of revenue exaction reached the point of exhaustion, however, and, by the end of the thirteenth century, reforms were implemented to limit what could be exacted by the *khātūns* from the conquered lands.

Initially, those *ordos* that belonged to women had to be reassigned to other women after the chief *khātūn* had passed away. However, when we look at the evolution of this practice, we see certain similarities between it and the development of the institution of regency. Female rule declined as a result of acculturation and the centralisation carried out by Ghazan Khan, and in certain circumstances the transmission of *khātūns*' wealth between women was interrupted by male members of the royal family, who redirected the resources towards themselves. This generally occurred in the context of political conflict between aspirants to the throne. The appropriation of women's wealth by male rulers occurred at the highest level in Iran during the conflictive decade of the 1290s with Geikhatu, Baydu and Ghazan all vying for control of the Ilkhanate. Abundant evidence is provided, especially by Rashid al-Din, on the transmission of these *ordos* from one lady to another. As we have seen, the Persian historian tries to justify the appropriation of property by Ghazan by claiming that Abaqa had granted him some of the wealthy *ordos* of his wives. However, it seems that this is yet another counterfactual story used by Rashid al-Din to justify the deeds of Ghazan, who, together with his economic reforms, political centralisation in the provinces and appropriation of *ordos*, was trying to secure his political supremacy.

The prominent role of women in politics and their relative economic autonomy also gave them the tools to actively participate in religious affairs throughout the empire. The *khātūns*' influence over matters of religion can be seen at both the social and the personal levels. Even before the empire, women played a role in the Mongol attitude towards religious authority; Börte interceding with Chinggis Khan to displace the great shaman Teb-Tengri is one example of a woman exercising influence over the general religious context of the empire. Once the empire had expanded and the Mongols came into contact with the variety of religions in Eurasia, women acted as protectors of religious leaders, favoured policies towards one or another religion and participated as mediators between the Mongols

and potential allies in Europe or Tibet. They maintained, within their own camps, a multi-faith environment that emulated the general religious milieu of the thirteenth century.

However, there was also an important personal component in their relationships with religion. Chapter 5 has shown how women actively participated in religious rituals in pre-imperial Mongolia and that they might even have performed as shamans leading religious practices. The presence of certain faiths such as Nestorian Christianity and Buddhism in pre-imperial Mongolia meant that these two beliefs had some adherents among women before the conquest of Eurasia began. Therefore, it is not surprising to find references to women interacting with Christian priests and Buddhist monks from the very beginning of the empire. This personal involvement in religion is attested to in the different *uluses* of the Mongol Empire, where women had under their protection clerics who guided them in the practice of their faith. The next generation of women, born and raised in Iran and Russia, also incorporated Islam into their religious outlooks in ways which resembled the first generation's attitude towards Christianity and the eastern faiths. However, it is difficult to assess from the available material that we have at the moment which Mongol women actually converted to Islam in the Middle East. The scant information that the sources provide allows us only to speculate that women might have followed the same pattern as that of their male counterparts: a slow but steady process of Islamisation stimulated by different channels of conversion that included interaction with charismatic Sufi shaykhs, the incorporation of Muslim men and women into the Mongol court and the growing presence of Islam within the 'domestic sphere' of women in the Ilkhanate. Finally, through their economic autonomy and political power, Mongol women played a role in patronising religious buildings and sacred scriptures across Eurasia. In Iran, it seems that they were following the established tradition of Saljuq women, which was also maintained in the subject dynasties of Fars, Kerman and Anatolia. The continual incorporation of those territories into the direct control of the Ilkhanate and the conversion of the Mongols to Islam led to Mongol women lending financial support to Islamic madrasas, mosques and Sufi leaders.

Most importantly, perhaps, this book has shown that the prominent role of women in the Mongol Empire was not due simply to the skills and activities of certain rare individuals, but rather that it was a general phenomenon. The role women played in politics, the economy and religion resulted from the traditional Mongol conception of womanhood being extrapolated into the context of world domination. And this role was not static, but was rather adapted to and modified according to the regions

where the Mongols settled. From their starting point as advisors to male chiefs in the Steppe, Mongol women would become regents and rulers of the empire; from being in charge of flocks and herds in the absence of their husbands, they would become possessors of considerable wealth, enjoying the freedom to practise their own religious beliefs whilst contributing to the religious policies of the empire. The amount of data that we have about these women in the sources is rather unbalanced. While, on the one hand, they are mentioned abundantly in the sources of the period, the information provided is generally elusive and incomplete. Yet, when their role 'becomes visible' in the written material, it serves to illustrate the fundamental role that women played in the rise, consolidation and fall of the Mongol Empire. It is hoped that this research will lead to a better understanding of their legacy and be a further step in the 'unveiling' of these *khātūns*, so that we may come to know not only more about them and their own history, but, through them, more about the history of the Mongol Empire as a whole.

Note

1. See the introductory discussion in Chapter 3 on Quade-Reutter's four notions, where she defines *Herrschaft* as 'rule'.

Glossary

anda: A blood brotherhood relationship formed by unrelated men. It constituted an important complement to the patriarchal kin-based Mongol society. See C. P. Atwood, *Encyclopaedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire* (New York, 2004), p. 13.

appanage system: The economic organisation of the empire under which the 'imperial family and its meritorious servants shared a collective rule over all their subjects, Mongol and non-Mongol alike. Members of the family thus deserved a "share" (*qubi*) in all the benefits of the empire'; Atwood, *Encyclopaedia of Mongolia*, p. 18.

atabeg: Literally meaning 'father lord', in Saljuq Iran it was 'a title given to an amir who was placed in charge of the upbringing of a Seljuq prince who, on appointment, was usually married to the prince's mother' (see A. Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia: Aspects of Administrative, Economic and Social History* (New York, 1988), p. 353). In the Mongol Empire, it remained a title among the rulers of the southern provinces, especially among the Salghurids of Fars.

bahadur: A title given to certain Mongol princes and generals which literally means 'hero' or 'brave warrior'.

bakhshi: A Buddhist priest, generally of Tibetan, Kashmiri or Uyghur origin.

balish (Persian): Also *süke* in Mongolian or *yastuq* in Uyghur. The most extended currency of the Mongol Empire, especially in the areas of the Golden Horde and the Ilkhanate. Juvayni mentions the circulation of both gold and silver *balish* in the Ilkhanate, although the majority of the money appears to have been coined in silver.

bitikchi: A scribal official of various kinds; a revenue accountant in Ilkhanid Iran.

boghtagh: Also *boqtaq*. This was a hat or headdress used by wealthy Mongol women as a sign of royalty in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and is documented by foreign travellers as being a piece of cloth used across the Mongol Empire from Iran to China. 'It had a round base

that fit on top of the head, a tall column, and a square top. On the square top fits a tuft formed of willow branches or rods covered by green felt … The *boqta* stood just over a meter or 3.5 feet high.' See Atwood, *Encyclopaedia of Mongolia*, p. 44.

Catholicos: The supreme leader of the 'Nestorian' Catholics of East Asia.

ch'ao: Paper money introduced in Iran by the Mongols.

ev-oghlans: The pages or domestic slaves of a Mongol noble.

iascot: A piece of silver weighing 10 marks. For more information, see P. Pelliot, 'Le prétendu mot "Iascot" chez Guillaume de Rubrouck', *T'oung Pao* 27 (1930), pp. 190–2.

injü: This refers to persons or lands granted by the Great Khan to his relatives or other nobles in the Ilkhanate as part of their appanages.

khāniqāh: A Sufi hospice. This generally refers to an endowed building complex that provided board, lodging, education and other facilities for devout men.

khātūn: A word of Soghdian origin borne by the wives and ladies of the nomadic people of Eurasia. In Mongolian, it is used to address the wife of a sovereign or member of the nobility and therefore combines the meanings of 'empress', 'queen' and 'lady' without distinction. See J. A. Boyle, 'Khātūn', *EI2*; Atwood, *Encyclopaedia of Mongolia*, p. 204.

khuṭba: Refers mostly to sermons and religious narrations pronounced generally in the mosque during Friday prayers and annual rituals.

Nestorian Church: Also known as the Assyrian Church, this is a branch of Christianity present in the Asian continent. It originated from the teachings of Nestorius (Patriarch of Constantinople) in the fifth century and was especially important for its missionary activities in the Far East and its presence in Iran and Central Asia during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

noyan: At the time of Chinggis Khan, this was a title received by Mongol military commanders of one thousand (*mingghan*) or of ten thousand (*tümen*) soldiers. Later, the term became used to define members of the Mongol aristocracy.

ordo: The mobile camp of a Mongol prince or princess containing the properties, administration and subjects of a certain member of the royal family.

ortaq (*ortoq*): Literally meaning 'partner', this refers to the 'merchants engaged in commerce and money/lending with capital supplied by the Mongol Empire's imperial treasury or the private treasuries of the empire's great aristocrats'. See Atwood, *Encyclopaedia of Mongolia*, pp. 429–30.

qoruq: Literary meaning 'taboo', in Mongol Iran this refers to sacred places or forbidden precincts.

Quanzhen sect: Literally meaning 'complete truth', this is a major sect of Taoism that originated in Northern China during the Song and Jin dynasties.

qubchur: The Mongol and nomadic taxation in the 'levy or additional cess imposed on the conquered population on the basis of a poll tax, flock or herd tax assessed on the basis of the number of animals in the flock or herd'. See Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 361.

quriltai: A nomadic institution consisting of a tribal assembly in which a new ruler was elected or confirmed.

Ruthenians: A generic term used by Latin sources to refer to Eastern European people of Slavic descent and Orthodox Christian faith.

ṣāḥib dīvān: The minister of the court mostly in charge of the finances of the realm.

Temüjin: The original name of Chinggis Khan before his enthronement as supreme ruler of the Mongols in 1206.

ṭarīqa (pl. *ṭuruq*): Sufi order.

ᶜulamāᵓ: '[T]he term refers more specifically to the scholars of the religious sciences (*faḳīh, mufassir, muftī, muḥaddith, mutakallim, ḳāriᵓ*, etc.), considered here exclusively in the context of Sunnism, where they are regarded as the guardians, transmitters and interpreters of religious knowledge, of Islamic doctrine and law; the term also embraces those who fulfil religious functions in the community that require a certain level of expertise in religious and judicial issues, such as judges and preachers (*ḳādī, khaṭīb*), the imāms of mosques, etc.' See 'ᶜUlamāᵓ', *EI2*.

ulus: The 'coalition of tribal groups who were the subjects of a ruler; the territory held by the ruler of such a coalition'. See Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 363. After 1260, it is generally agreed that the Mongol Empire was composed of four main *uluses*: Yuan China, the Golden Horde in Russia, the Chaghataid Khanate in Central Asia and the Ilkhanate in Iran.

vaqf (pl. *auqāf*): An endowment. This term generally refers to a charitable donation (*vaqf-e ᶜāmm* or *vaqf-e khair*) or a personal or private endowment (*vaqf-e ahlī* or *vaqf-e khāṣṣ*).

yam (*jam*) system: A courier and relay system which linked the Mongol Empire together. It was a common communication and postal system that had many 'prototypes' in early nomadic empires, but which was an 'unusually potent institution under the Mongols'. See Atwood, *Encyclopaedia of Mongolia*, pp. 258–9.

yarligh: A royal order or decree issued by the Great Khan or Mongol rulers in their territories.

yasaq/yasa: The term generally refers to 'the code of Chinggis Khan'. Alternatively, it is also used to refer to 'Mongol tradition' or customary law, which can in turn refer to a group of regulations, decrees or judicial decisions.

zandanichi: A type of cloth manufactured in the village of Zandana in Central Asia.

Abbreviations

(See bibliography for full references)

Boyle:	Juvayni, Alaʾ al-Din, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*.
BS:	Wallis Budge, E. A. (trans.), *The Monks of Kublai Khan, Emperor of China*.
Chronography:	Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abû'l-Faraj.*
DA:	Kirmani, Khwaju, *Dīvān-i Ashᶜār*.
EI2:	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn.
EIr:	*Encyclopaedia Iranica*.
FO:	Hayton, Frère, *The Flower of Histories of the East*.
HA:	Abru, Hafiz-i, *Ẓayl-i Jāmiᶜ al-tawārīkh-i Rashīdī.*
HAB:	Abru, Hafiz-i, *Chronique des rois mongols en Iran*.
HYL:	de Rachewiltz, I., 'The *Hsi-Yu Lu* by Yeh-Lü Ch'u-Ts'ai'.
IB:	Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, A.D. 1325–1354*.
IB2:	Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325–1354*.
JT:	Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Jāmiᶜ al-tawārīkh*, ed. M. Rawshan and M. Musavi.
JTK:	Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Jāmiᶜ al-tawārīkh*, ed. B. Karimi.
JTQ:	Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Histoire des Mongols de la Perse*.
Khwandamir:	Khwandamir, Ghiyath al-Din, *'Habibu's-Siyar': The Reign of the Mongol and the Turk.*
MA:	Shabankaraʾi. *Majmaᶜ al-ansāb*.
MP:	Polo, M., *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian: Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*.
MP2:	Polo, M., *The Description of the World*.
MR:	Aflaki, Shams al-Din Ahmad, *Manāqib al-ᶜārifīn*.
MUA:	Aqsaraᶜi, Mahmud b. Muhammad al-Karim, *Mosāmerat al-akhbār*.
NA:	Akanc', Grigor of, 'History of the Nation of Archers'.

Raverty:	Juzjani, Minhaj Siraj, *‘Tabaḳāt-i Nāṣirī’: A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia.*
SH:	Anonymous, *The Secret History of the Mongols*.
SN:	Nizam al-Mulk, Husayn ibn ᶜAli, *Siyāsat’nāmah.*
SND:	Nizam al-Mulk, Husayn ibn ᶜAli, *The Book of Government, or Rules for Kings.*
SRN:	Zarkub Shirazi, Abu al-ᶜAbbas, *Shirāz-nāma*.
SS:	Ibn Bazzāz Ardabīlī, *Ṣafwat al-Ṣafā.*
SU:	Kirmani, Nasir al-Din Munshi, *Simṭ al-ulā lil-Ḥaẓrat al-ᶜulyā dar ‘Tārīkh-i Qarāᵓkhitāᵓīyān-i Kirmān’*.
Successors:	Rashid al-Din Tabib, *The Successors of Genghis Khan*.
TA:	Li, Chih-chᶜang, *The Travels of an Alchemist: The Journey of the Taoist Chᵓang-Chᵓun from China to the Hindukush.*
Thackston:	Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Jamiᶜu’t-tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*.
TB:	Banakati, Fakhr al-Din, *Tārīkh-i Banākatī*.
TG:	Mustawfi Qazvini, Hamd Allah, *The ‘Ta’rikh-i-Guzida’: or ‘Select History’ of Hamduᵓllah Mustawfí-i-Qazwini*.
THS:	Khwandamir, Ghiyath al-Din, *Tārīkh-i ḥabīb al-siyar*.
TJG:	Juvayni, Alaᵓ al-Din ᶜAta Malik, *Tārīkh-i jahān-gushā*.
TN:	Juzjani, Minhaj Siraj, *Tabaqāt-i Nāṣīrī*.
TS:	Anonymous, *Tārīkh-i āl-i Saljūq dar Ānāṭūlī*.
TSQ:	Anonymous, *Tārīkh-i Shāhī-yi Qarā-Khitāᵓiyān*.
TU:	Kashani, Abu al-Qasim ᶜAbd Allah ibn ᶜAli, *Tārīkh-i Ūljāytū.*
TV:	Vassaf, ᶜAbd Allah ibn Fazdl Allah, *Taḥrīr-i tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf.*
WR:	Rubruck, William of, *The Mission of William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke 1253–1255*.
WR2:	Rubruck, William of, *The Journey of William of Rubruck to the Eastern Parts of the World, 1253–1255, as Narrated by Himself.*
ZM:	Ward, L. J., ‘*Ẓafarnāmah* of Mustawfī’.

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